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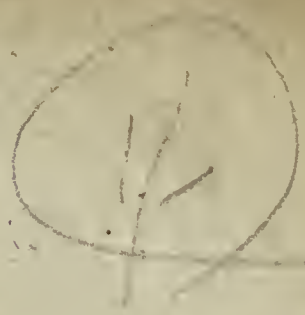

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THE

WORKS

Of the Pious, Reverend and Learn'd

Mr. *HUGH BINNING*,

CONTAINING

I. **The Common Principles of the Christian Religion**; or his Sermons on the Catechism.

II. The **Sinners Sanctuary**, being xl. Sermons on the Eight of the *Romans*.

III. **Fellowship with God**; or xxviii. Sermons on the First Epistle of *John*.

IV. **Heart Humiliation**; being xviii. Sermons on several choice Texts.

To which is perfix'd the LIFE of the AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by R. FLEMING and COMPANY, and sold by Mr. JAMES DAVIDSON, and JOHN PATON, and other Booksellers in Town and Country. MDCCXXXV.

THE LIFE OF Mr. HUGH BINNING, ſometime Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Govan.*

THERE being a great Demand for the ſeveral Books that are printed under Mr. Binning's Name, it was judged proper to undertake a new and correct Impreſſion of them in one Volume: This being done the Publiſhers were much concerned to have the Life of ſuch an uſeful and eminent Miniſter of Chriſt written in Juſtice to his Memory, and his great Services in the Work of the Goſpel, that it might go along with this Impreſſion. We living now at ſo great Diſtance from the Time wherein he made a Figure in the World muſt be at a conſiderable Loſs in giving an exact and particular Relation; however, his pious and exemplary Life, may in ſome Meaſure be known from his Writings; and for this End, a great many bright Paſſages might be gathered out of them, which would raiſe his Character highly in the Eyes of all good Men; for the Reverend Mr. Robert M'Ward Miniſter in Glaſgow obſerved, "That "his Life was his Sermons put in Print, by which Means, they who did "forget what he had ſaid in the Pulpit, by ſeeing what he did in his Converſation,

" verſation, might remember what they had forgot; he lived as he ſpoke, " and ſpoke as he lived." All due Pains have been taken to procure proper Materials, and good Vouchers of the following Narration: Some few Things are learned from the Prefaces prefix'd to his ſeveral Pieces, by worthy and able Divines, who reviſed and publiſhed them; more Accounts of him were furniſhed by Perſons of great Credit, on whoſe Veracity we can ſafely rely; but the moſt remarkable Paſſages of his Life are happily preſerved, in a Letter written by Mr. M'Ward, to the Reverend Mr. James Coleman, ſometime Miniſter at Sluys in Flanders. The Writer of his Life, muſt in the Entry confeſs, that his Part is ſo ſmall, that he can ſcarce aſſume any Thing to himſelf, but the procuring of the Materials from others, the copying out of thoſe Things that were of any Moment, and diſpoſing them in the beſt and moſt natural Order he could think of, having ſtudied the Strictneſs of a ſevere Hiſtorian, without helping out Things with his Invention, or ſetting them off by a rhetorical Stile of Language; nay, all that is contained in Mr. M'Ward's large Letter concerning him, is told almoſt in his very Words, with a little Variation of the Order wherein he had placed the ſame, omitting the many long Digreſſions on ſeveral Subjects, which that worthy Perſon judged fit to inſiſt upon, taking Occaſion from what he had noticed concerning Mr. Binning, to enlarge on the ſame.

John Binning of Dalvennan was married to Margaret M'Kell a Daughter of Mr. Matthew M'Kell Miniſter at Bothwel, and Siſter to Mr. Hugh M'Kell one of the Miniſters of Edinburgh; he had by her Mr. Hugh and Alexander. The Father was poſſeſt of no inconſiderable Eſtate in the Shire of Air, for Mr. Hugh having died before his Father, John the only Son of Mr. Hugh, was ſerved Heir to his Grandfather in the Lands of Dalvennan. Alexander the ſecond Son, who died about ten Years ago, got the Lands of Machrimore, and was married to a Daughter of Alexander Crawfurd of Kerſe, and is ſucceeded therein by his Son John Binning, at preſent a Writer in Edinburgh.

The worldly Circumſtances of the Grandfather being ſo good, he was thereby enabled to give his Son Hugh a liberal Education: The good and deſireable Effects of which appeared very early upon him; the Greatneſs of his Spirit and Capacity gave his Parents good Ground to conceive the pleaſant Hope of his being a promiſing Child. When he was at the Grammar-ſchool, he made ſo great Proficiency in the Knowledge of the Latin Tongue, and Roman Authors, that he outſtrip'd his Condiſciples, even

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such as were some Years older than himself. When his Fellow School-boys went to their Play and Diversion, he declined their Society, and chose to employ himself, either in secret Duty with God, or Conference with religious People. his Pastime was to recreate himself in this Manner, he had an Aversion to Sports, Games and other Diversions, not from any Moroseness or Melancholly of Temper, being rather of an affable, chearful and debonair Disposition, thinking that Time was too precious to be lavished away in these Things; Religion and religious Exercises were his Choice, and the Time he had to spare from his Studies he spent that Way. He began to have sweet Familiarity with God, and to live in near Communion with him before others began seriously to lay to Heart their lost and undone Condition by Nature, and that additional Misery they expose themselves to by walking in a wicked Way and sinful Course. When he arrived at the 13th or 14th Year of his Age he had even then attained so much Experience in the Ways of God, that the most judicious and exercised Christians in the Place confessed they were much edified, strengthned and comforted by him; nay, that he provoked them to Diligence in the Duties of Religion, being abundantly sensible, that they were much outrun by a Youth.

Before he was fourteen Years old, he entered upon the Study of Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, *wherein he made very considerable Progress, and with as much Facility outstrip'd his fellow Students, as he had done his Condisciples in the* Latin *School; by which means, he came to be taken Notice of in the College by the Professors and Students; and at the same Time, that he made Proficiency in the liberal Sciences, he advanced remarkably in Religion. The abstruse Depths of Philosophy, which are the Torture of slow Ingines and weak Capacities, he dived into without any Trouble or Pain: And notwithstanding of his surprising Attainments and Improvements, his great* Acumen *and ready Apprehension of Things, whereby he was able to do more in one Hour, than others in some Days, by hard Study and close Application; and tho' on these Accounts he was much respected by the eminent Ministers of the City, and learned Professors of the University; yet was he ever humble, never exalted above Measure, nor swelled with the Tympany of Pride and Self-conceit, the common Foible and Disease of young Men of any Greatness of Spirit.*

So soon as he had finished his Course of Philosophy, he was made Master of Arts with great Applause; and having furnished his Mind with an uncommon Measure of the ancillary Knowledge of Letters, he began the

Study of Divinity with a View to serve God in the holy Ministry; at which Time there happened to be a Vacancy in the College of Glasgow, by the Resignation of Mr. James Dalrymple *of* Stair, *who had been Mr.* Bunning's *Master. This Gentleman was so great and so good a Man that it is impossible to avoid giving an Account of some of the remarkable Things of his Life. The first Imployment he had, was in the Army being a Captain in* William *Earl of* Glencairn's *Regiment of Foot: but as he had made his Studies with great Application, at the earnest Request of the Professors of the University of Glasgow, he stood as Candidate for a Chair of Philosophy, in a comparative Trial in Buff and Scarlet, the Military Dress of those Days, to which he was with great Applause preferr'd. In this Station he was greatly esteem'd, for his uncommon Abilities in Philosophy and other Parts of Learning: But being resolv'd to follow the Study of the Law, he soon resigned his Office of Professor, and entered Advocate upon the 7th of* February 1648, *and quickly distinguished himself by his Pleadings before the Court of Session, avoiding always to take any Imployment, either as Advocate, or Judge in criminal Matters, tho' often respectively press'd to accept of both, which proceeded from a Delicacy in his Opinion, least to wit, he might possibly be the Instrument, either of making the Innocent suffer, or to acquit the Guilty. In this Situation he continued till the* Tender *was imposed, when he, with many other eminent Lawyers, withdrew from the Bar. On* June *26th* 1657, *he was by a Commission sign'd by General* Monk, *in Name of the Protector's Council of* Scotland, *appointed to be one of the Judges; which was soon confirmed by a Nomination directly from the Protector himself, in the Month of* July *thereafter, which he had no Inclination to accept of, being himself no Favourer of the Usurpation; for as he had been Secretary to the Commission which had been sent to the King to* Breda, *he had waited upon his Majesty upon his landing in the* North; *however being importunately pressed to accept by many eminent Men, and amongst them, by several Ministers, who all distinguished between his serving as one of the Council under the Protector, and exercising the Office of a Judge by administrating Justice to his fellow Subjects, he did accept; and his Act of Admission only bears his giving his Oath* de fideli administratione. *After the Restoration he was made by the King one of the ordinary Lords of Session by his Majesty's Nomination dated at* Whitehall February *13th* 1661 2. *And in the* 1671, *he was created President of that Court, in the Room of Sir* John Gilmuir *of* Craigmiller. *In the Parliament* 1681, *he*

he made a great Appearance for securing the Protestant Religion; and by Reason of the Difficulties of the Times, he desired Leave of his Majesty to retire from Business and live quietly in the Country; but in this he was prevented by a Commission, dated the 14th of October 1681, *which having past the Great Seal was produced the 1st of* November *thereafter, by which Commission he was superseded as President of the Session and in the Year* 1682, *was obliged for his Safety to retire to* Holland; *for tho' he had the King's Promise that he should live undisturbed, yet he was let know that he could not be in Safety; and after his Retreat to* Holland, *several unjust but fruitless Attempts were made to have him tried for Treason, both before the Parliament and Justiciary for no other Reason, than that he had always with Sincerity and Firmness given his Opinion to the King and his Ministers, against the Measures that were then followed, and which in the following Reign, at length brought about the glorious Revolution, at which Time* Anno 1688 *he attended King* William *in that Expedition, by the Success of which we were most happily delivered from Tyranny and Slavery.* November *1st* 1689, *Sir* James Dalrymple *of* Stair *his Letter as President of the Session was produced and recorded, and he was accordingly admitted and restored to his Office. In the Year* 1690, *he was created a Viscount upon Account of his great Services and Merit. He published while in* Holland *his* Institutions of the Law of *Scotland (a more full Edition of which came out in the* 1693,) *and two Volumes in* Folio *of Decisions, from the* 1661, *to the* 1681 *inclusive. He also published a System of Physicks, valued greatly at the Time, and a Book intitled a* Vindication of the Divine Attributes *was also his, in which there is discovered great Force of Argument and Knowledge. He was lookt upon before his Death as the living Oracle of our Law, and at present his* Institutions *are appealed to, as containing the true and solid Principles of it. Mr.* Binning *who had lately been his Scholar, was determined after much Entreaty (of which we shall presently give an Account) to stand as a Candidate for that Post. The Masters of the College, according to the usual laudable Custom, emitted a Program, and sent it to all the Universities in the Kingdom inviting such as had a Mind to dispute for a Profession of Philosophy, to fist themselves before them, and offer themselves to compete for that Preferment, giving Assurance that without Partiality and Respect of Persons, the Place should be conferred upon him, who should be found* dignior & doctior.

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The Miniſters of the City of Glaſgow *conſidering how much it was the Intereſt of the Church, that well qualified Perſons be put into the Profeſſion of Philoſophy, and that Univerſities by this Means become moſt uſeful Seminaries for the Church; and that ſuch as had ſerved as Regents in the College, were ordinarily brought out to the Miniſtry, who, as the Divinity Chairs became vacant, were advanced to that Honour, many Inſtances of which I am able to condeſcend upon; And they knowing that Mr.* Binning *was eminently pious, and one of a ſolid Judgment, as well as of a bright Genius, ſet upon him to ſiſt himſelf among the other Competitors, but had great Difficulty to overcome his Modeſty; however they at laſt prevailed with him to declare before the Maſters his Willingneſs to undertake the Diſpute with others.*

There were two Candidates more, one of them had the Advantage of great Intereſt with Doctor Strang, *Principal of the College at that Time, and the other a Scholar of great Abilities, and of the ſame Sentiments with the Doctor in ſome problematical Points of Divinity, which with great Subtility had been debated in the Schools. Mr.* Binning *ſo managed the Diſpute, and acquitted himſelf in all the Parts of Trial, that to the Conviction of the Judges he very much darkned his Rivals. And as to the preciſe Point of Qualification, in reſpect of Literature, cut off all Shadow of a Demur and Pretence of Difficulty in the Deciſion; however the Doctor, and ſome of the Faculty who joined him, tho' they could not pretend that the Candidate they appeared for had an Equality, much leſs a Superiority in the Diſpute; yet they argued a* cæteris paribus, *that the Perſon they inclined to prefer, being a Citizen's Son, having a good Competency of Learning, and being a Perſon of more Years, had greater Experience than Mr.* Binning *could be ſuppoſed to have and conſequently was more fit to be a Teacher of Youth: Mr.* Binning *being but Yeſterday a fellow Student with thoſe, he was to teach, it was not to be expected, that the Students would behave to him with that Reſpect and Regard, which ſhould be paid to a Maſter. But to this it was replied, That Mr.* Binning *was ſuch a pregnant Scholar, ſo wiſe and ſedate as to be above all the Follies and Vanities of Youth, that he knew very well how to let no Man deſpiſe his Youth; his Wit was neither vain nor light and his Fancy was obedient to his Reaſon, and what was wanting in Years, was ſufficiently made up by his ſingular Indowments, and more than ordinary Qualifications. A Member of the Faculty perceiving the Struggle among them to be great (and indeed the Affair ſeem'd to have been argued very plau-*

plauſibly on both Sides) propoſed a Diſpute between the two Candidates extempore, upon any Subject they ſhould be pleaſed to preſcribe. This being conſidered by the Faculty, did quickly put a Period to the Diviſion among them; and theſe who had oppoſed him, not being willing to engage their Friend again in the Liſts, with ſuch an able Antagoniſt, they yielded the Queſtion, and Mr. Binning *was elected.*

Mr. Binning *was not full nineteen Years of Age, when he commenced Regent and Profeſſor of Philoſophy; and tho' he had not Time to prepare a Syſtem of any Part of his Profeſſion, being inſtantly after his Election to take up his Claſs; yet ſuch was the Quickneſs and Fertility of his Invention, the Tenaciouſneſs of his Memory, and the Solidity of his Judgment, that his Dictates to the Scholars had a Depth of Learning of that Kind, and Perſpicuity of Expreſſion. And I am aſſured, That he was among the firſt in* Scotland, *that began to reform Philoſophy from the barbarous Terms and unintelligible Diſtinctions of the Schoolmen, and the many vain Diſputes and trifling Subtilties, which rather perplexed the Minds of the Youth, than furniſhed them with ſolid and uſeful Knowledge.*

He continued in this Profeſſion for the Space of three Years, and diſcharged his Truſt ſo well, that he gained the general Applauſe of the Univerſity for his Accademical Exerciſes: And this was the more wonderful, That having turned his Thoughts towards the Miniſtry, he carried on his Theological Studies at the ſame Time, and made vaſt Improvements therein; to which he was enabled by his deep Penetration, and a Memory ſo retentive that he ſcarcely forgot any Thing he had read or heard. It was eaſy and ordinary for him to tranſcribe any Sermon, after he returned to his Chamber at ſuch a full Length, as that the intelligent and judicious Reader who heard it preached, ſhould not find one Sentence to be wanting.

During this Period of his Life, he gave a Proof and Evidence of the great Progreſs he had made in the Knowledge of Divinity, by a Compoſure on that choice Paſſage of the holy Scripture, 2 Cor. v. 14. For the Love of God conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.

This Performance he ſent to a certain Gentlewoman for her private Edification, who had been detained at Edinburgh *for a long Time with Buſineſs of Importance, and having peruſed the ſame, ſhe judged it was a Sermon of ſome eminent Miniſter in the Weſt of* Scotland, *and put it into the Hands of the then Provoſt of* Edinburgh *for his Opinion, who was ſo well ſatisfied with it, that ſuppoſing it to be taken from the Mouth*

of

of one, whom the City had formerly resolved to call, was restless till a Call was brought about to him, to be one of the Ministers of the City; but when the Lady returned back to Glasgow, *she found her Mistake, by Mr* Binning's *asking the Discourse from her. This was the first Discovery he had given of his great Dexterity and Ability in explaining of Scripture. At the Expiration of his third Year as a Professor of Philosophy, the Parish of* Govan, *which lies adjacent to the City of* Glasgow, *and is within the Bounds of that Presbytery, happened to be vacant. Before this Time, whoever was Principal of the College of* Glasgow, *was also Minister of* Govan, *for Mr.* Robert Boyd *of* Trochrig *(a Person of very great Learning, as his Commentary on the Epistle to the* Ephesians, *and his* Hecatombe Christiana *testify) after he had been Minister at* Verral *in* France, *and Professor of Divinity in* Saumur, *returned to* Scotland, *and was settled Principal of the College, and Minister of* Govan; *but this being attended with Inconveniencies, an Alteration was made, and the Presbytery having a View of supplying that Vacancy with Mr.* Binning, *did take him upon Trials, in order to his being licensed as a Preacher; and after he was licensed, he did preach at* Govan, *to the great Satisfaction of that People. Mr.* Binning *was sometime after called and invited to be Minister of the said Parish, which Call the Presbytery heartily approved of, and entered him upon Trials for Ordination, about the 22d Year of his Age, and as a Part of Trials, they prescribed to him a common Head,* De concursu & influxu divino cum actionibus creaturarum. *The Occasion of which was, that Dr.* Strang *Principal of the College, and a Member of the Presbytery, had vented some peculiar Notions upon that profound Subject, and having delivered a very elaborate Discourse,* viva voce, *to the Admiration of all who heard it, he gave in according to Custom, his* Thesis *to be impugned by the Members of the Presbytery, which was the direct Antithesis of Doctor* Strang's *Opinion in his Dictates to the Students on that Controversy. The Doctor being pitched upon to be one of his Opponents; found his Credit and Reputation much engaged, and exerted his metaphysical and subtile Talent on that Occasion: But Mr.* Binning *maintained his Ground by the Weight and Solidity of his Defence, to the great Satisfaction of all that were present; so that some were pleased to say, That young Mr.* Binning *appeared to be the old learned Doctor: Nay, the Doctor himself after the Rencounter, admiring Mr.* Binning's *Abilities and Parts said, Where hath this young Man got all this Learning and Reading? When he had finished his Trials, he had the unanimous Approbation*

bation of the Presbytery; may their Declaration and Testimony of his Fitness to be one of the Ministers of the City, upon the first Vacancy: And I am assured, that at the very same Time the Masters of the University had it in their View to bring him back again to their Society, when ever the Profession of Divinity should become vacant.

He was, considering his Age, a Prodigy of Learning, for before he had arrived at the 26th Year of his Life, he had such a large Stock of useful Knowledge, as to be philologus, philosophus & theologus eximius, *and might well have been an Ornament in the most famous and flourishing University in* Europe. *This was the more astonishing, if we consider his Weakness and Infirmity of Body, not being able to read much at one Time, or to undergo the Fatigue of assiduous Study. But this was well supplied, partly by a Memory that retained every Thing he heard or read, and partly by a solid penetrating Judgment, whereby he digested it well, and made it his own; so that with a singular Dexterity, he could bring it furth seasonably, and communicate it to the Use and Advantage of others, drain'd from the Dregs he found about it, or intermixed with it; insomuch that his Knowledge seemed rather to be born with him, than to have been acquired by hard and laborious Study.*

From his Childhood he knew the Scriptures, and from a Boy had been under much deep and spiritual Exercise, until the Time (or a little before it) of his Entry upon the Office of the Ministry, when he came to a great Calm and lasting Tranquility of Mind, being mercifully relieved of all those Doubtings, which had for a long Time greatly exercised him; and tho' he was of a tender and weakly Constitution, yet Love to Christ, and a Concern for the Good of precious Souls committed to him, constrained him to such Diligence in feeding the Flock, as to spend himself in the Work of the Ministry. It was observed of him, That he was not much averse at any Time from imbracing an Invitation to preach before the most experienced Christians, even the learned Professors of the University, and the Revereud Ministers of the City: And when one of his most intimate Friends noticed herein a Difference from that Modesty and Self-denial, which appeared in the whole of his Way and Conduct, he took the Freedom to ask him, how he came to be so easily prevailed with to preach before Persons of so great Experience and Judgment, whose eminent Gifts and Graces he highly valued and esteemed? He made this excellent Reply, That when he had a clear Call to mention his blessed

Master's Name in any Place, he had no more to say, but Here am I, send me: *What am I that I should resist his heavenly Call? And when he, whose Name is holy and reverend is spoken of and to, and is there present, the Presence of no other Person is to be regarded or dreaded; and under that Impression, I forget who is present, and who is absent.*

Tho' he was bookish, and much intent upon the fulfilling of his Ministry, he turned his Thoughts to Marriage, and did marry a virtuous and excellent Person. Mrs. Barbara Simpson, *Daughter to Mr.* James Simpson *a Minister in* Ireland. *Upon the Day on which he was to be married, he went accompanied with his Friends (amongst whom were some grave and worthy Ministers) to an adjacent Country Congregation, upon the Day of their weekly Sermon. The Minister of the Parish delayed Sermon till they should come, hoping to put the Work upon one of the Ministers he expected to be there; but all of them declining it, he next tried if he could prevail with the Bridegroom, and succeeded, tho' the Invitation was not expected, and the Nature of the Occasion seemed to be somewhat alien from his being employed in that Work. It was no difficult Task to him upon a short Warning to preach, having a prompt and ready Gift: He was never at a Loss for Words and Matter, and having stept aside a little Time to premeditate and implore his Master's Presence and Assistance (for he was ever afraid to be alone in that Work) he went immediately to the Pulpit, and preached upon* 1 Pet. i. 15. But as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of Conversation. *At which Time, he was so remarkably helped, that all acknowledged, that God was with him of a Truth. And the People of the Parish, who had come to hear their own Minister, (a truly pious and excellent Man) were so surprised and taken with him, as if God, besides his ordinary Resident (so Mr.* M'Ward *expresses it) had sent them an extraordinary Embassador to negotiate a Peace between God and them, and a prompt Paranymph unto, and a skilful Suiter of a Spouse for Jesus Christ the blessed Bridegroom, that he might present them as a chast Virgin to this divine Husband.*

However he studied in his publick Discourses to condescend to the Capacity of the meaner Sort of Hearers, yet it must be owned, that his preaching Gift was not so much accommodated and suited to a Country Congregation, as it was to the judicious and learned. The Subjects of Sermons are so numerous and various, and the Order of Men's disposing of their Thoughts upon these Subjects so different, that a Suit of Cloaths may be as soon made

to

to answer every Man's Back, as a fixed and invariable Method may be prescribed, that shall agree to every Subject, and every Man's Taste. Mr. Binning's *Method was singular and peculiar to himself, much after the harranguing Way. He was no Stranger to the Rules of Art, and knew well how to make his Method subservient to the Subjects he handled; and tho' he tells not his Discourse has so many Parts, yet it wanted not Method, it being* maximum artis celare artem. *His Diction and Language is easy and fluent, neat and fine, void of all Affectation and Bombast; his Stile was free from starch Lusciousness and Intricacy; every Period has a Kind of undesigned negligent Elegance, which arrests the Reader's Attention, and makes what he says as Apples of Gold set in Pictures of Silver: So that, considering the Time when he lived, it might be said, that he had carried the Orator's Prize from his Cotemporaries in* Scotland, *and was not at that Time inferior to the best Pulpit Orators in* England, *the* English *Language having got its greatest Embellishments and Refinings but of late Years. In his Sermons his Matter gives Life to his Words, and his Words add a Lustre to his Matter. That great Divine Mr.* James Durham, *an excellent Judge of Men, gave this Verdict of him, That there is no speaking after Mr.* Binning; *and truly he had* the Tongue of the Learned, and knew how to speak a Word in Season. *The Subject-matter of his Sermons is mostly practical, and yet rational and argumentative, fit to inform the Understanding of his Hearers, and move their Affections: And when Controversies came in his Way, he shewed great Acuteness and Judgment in discussing and determining them, and no less Skill in applying them to Practice. His Discourses were so solid and substantial, so heavenly and sublime, that they not only feed but feast the Reader,* as with Marrow and Fatness. *In the most of them, we meet with much of the Sublime, expressed in a most lofty, pathetick and moving Manner. Mr.* M'Ward *says in his Letter,* "That as to the whole of "Mr. Binning's *Writings, I know no Man's Pen on the Heads he hath* "handled more adapted for Edification, or which with a pleasant Vio- "lence, will sooner find or force a Passage into the Heart of a judicious "experienced Reader, and cast Fire, even e'er he is aware (O happy "Surprize!) into his Affections, and set them into a Flame. *And in another Part of the same Letter, he says,* "The Subjects he discourses "upon are handled with such a pleasant and profitable Variety of Thought "and Expression, that the Hearer or Reader is taken with it, as if he "had never met with it before." *He was such a skillful Scribe, as*

knew how to bring out of his Store, Things new and old; *the old with such Sweetneſs and Savour as it ſeemed ſtill new, and the new retained its firſt Sweetneſs ſo as never to grow old.*

He and ſome young Miniſters in the ſame Presbytery, who had been Students of Divinity, when he was Profeſſor of Philoſophy, did keep private Meetings for Chriſtian Fellowſhip, and their mutual Improvement: But finding that he was in Danger of being puft up with the high Opinion they had of him, he broke up theſe Meetings, tho' he ſtill keept up a Brotherly Correſpondence with them, for the vigorous Proſecution of their miniſterial Work. He ſtudied to be cloathed with Humility, and to hide his Attainments under that Vail; tho' he wanted not Matter and Words wherewith to pleaſe and profit all his Hearers, yet at every Thought of his appearing in publick to ſpeak of God and Chriſt to Men, his Soul was filled with a holy Tremor, which he vented by ſaying, Ah Lord! I am a Child and cannot ſpeak; *teach me what I ſhall ſay of thee, who* cannot order my Speech by Reaſon of Darkneſs. *In his firſt Sermon on the fourth Queſtion of our ſhorter Catechiſm, he expreſſes himſelf in a moſt elegant and rapturous Manner;* "*We are now, ſays he, about this* "*Queſtion What God is? But who can anſwer it? or if anſwered, who* "*can underſtand it? It ſhould aſtoniſh us in the very Entry to think we are* "*about to ſpeak and to hear of his Majeſty,* whom Eye hath not ſeen, "nor Ear heard, nor hath it entered into the Heart of any Creature "to conſider what he is. *Think ye, blind Men could underſtand a per-* "*tinent Diſcourſe of Light and Colours? Would they form any ſuitable* "*Notion of that they had never ſeen, and cannot be known but by ſeeing?* "*What an ignorant Speech would a deaf Man make of Sound, which a* "*Man cannot ſo much as know what it is, but by hearing of it? How then* "*can we ſpeak of God, who dwells in ſuch inacceſſible Light; that tho' we* "*had our Eyes opened, yet they are far leſs proportioned to that reſplendent* "*Brightneſs, than a blind Eye is to the Sun's Light?*"

He was a great Student in the Books of Creation and Providence, and took much Pleaſure in meditating upon what is written in theſe Volumes; the Wonders he diſcovered in both led him up to the infinitely wiſe and powerful Maker and Preſerver of all Things. Once when he came to viſit a Gentleman of good Learning, and his intimate Acquaintance; the Gentleman took him to his Garden, and in their Walk he diſcourſed with him to his great Surprize of the objective Declarations, which every Thing makes of its almighty Creator; and talked of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs

of

of God, particularly in cloathing the Earth with a green Garb, rather than with a Garment of any other Colour; and having plucked a Flower from it, he made a moſt ſavoury ſpiritual Diſcourſe; he ſo diſſected and anatomized the ſame, as to ſet forth the glorious Perfections of its Maker, in a moſt taking and entertaining Manner.

But the main Object of his pious and devout Contemplations was God in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf: For God who commanded the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs, had ſhined into his Heart to give him the Light of the Knowledge of God, in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt; *ſo that he not only underſtood the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God himſelf, but it was given to him to make others know them: His Preaching was* in the Demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power. *His Sermons are the very Tranſumpt of what had paſt betwixt Chriſt and his own Soul; he ſpoke and wrote his experimental Knowledge, and did both ſpeak and write, becauſe he believed. He did earneſtly contend for the Articles of Faith and Truths of Religion, and could never think of parting with one Hoof, or the leaſt Grain of Truth; being perſwaded, that Chriſtian Concord muſt have Truth for its Foundation, and Holineſs for its Attendant, without which it will decline into a Defection, and degenerate into a Conſpiracy againſt Religion. As to the Duties of Chriſtianity, he inforced the Performance of theſe, with all the Arguments of Perſwaſion; ſo that through the Bleſſing of God, his Pulpit Diſcourſes became the Power of God to the Illumination of the Underſtandings of his Hearers, the Renovation of their Natures, the Reformation of their Lives, and the Salvation of their Souls.*

The difficult Part of a Reprover, he acted in the moſt prudent and gaining Manner, when he did lick with his Tongue the Mote out of his Brother's Eye, *he did it with all Tenderneſs, and with the Tear in his own. His Words wanted neither Point nor Edge for drawing of Blood, when the Caſe of the Offender made it an indiſpenſible Duty; and when he was neceſſitated to uſe Sharpneſs with any, they were convinced, that he honeſtly and ſincerely intended their ſpiritual Good. His* Compaſſion on the ignorant, and them that were out of the Way, *made it evident, how much he* conſidered himſelf as encompaſſed with Infirmity, *and ſo within the Hazard of being tempted.*

He was a Perſon of exemplary Moderation and Sobriety of Spirit, had healing Methods much at Heart, and ſtudied to promote Love and Peace among his Brethren in the Miniſtry. He vigorouſly contributed to the Re-

covery

covery of the Humanity of Christianity, which had been much lost in the Differences of the Times, and the Animosities which followed thereupon. These Virtues and Graces had such an Ascendant in his Soul, that when he carried Coals about with him taken from the Altar, to warm the Souls of all (with whom he conversed) with Love to God, his Truths, Interests and People, so he carried Sanctuary-water about with him to cool and extinguish, what of undue Passion he perceived to accompany the Zeal of good and well designing Persons; a Temper that is rarely found in one of his Age: But ripe Harvest Grapes were found upon this Vine in the beginning of Spring; and no Wonder since he lived so near the Sun of Righteousness, and lay under the plentiful Showers of Divine Grace, and the ripening Influences of the Holy Spirit.

The prevailing of the Englisn *Sectarians under* Oliver Cromwel, *to the Overthrow of the Presbyterian Interest in* England, *and the various Attempts which they made in* Scotland, *on the Constitution and Discipline of this Church, was one of the greatest Difficulties, which the Ministry had then to struggle with. Upon this he made the following most excellent Reflection, in a Sermon preached on a Day of publick Humiliation,* Page 502, Col. 2. What if the Lord hath defaced all that this Kingdom was instrumental in building of in *England*, that he alone may have the Glory in a second Temple more glorious? *And when he observed, That the Zeal of many for the* Solemn League and Covenant *(by which they were sworn to endeavour the Preservation of the reformed Religion in* Scotland, *and the Reformation of Religion in the Kingdoms of* England *and* Ireland) *was not attended with a suitable Amendment of their own Lives, he takes up a bitter Lamentation over them in a very remarkable Paragraph,* Page 554, Col. 1. Alas we deceive ourselves with the Noise of a Covenant, and a Cause of God; we cry it up as an Antidote against all Evils, use it as a Charm, even as the *Jews* did their Temple; and in the mean Time we do not care how we walk before God, or with our Neighbours. Well *(thus saith the Lord) Trust ye not in lying Words, saying, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these. For if ye throughly amend your Ways and your Doings; if ye throughly execute Judgment between a Man and his Neighbour; if ye oppress not the Stranger, the Fatherless, and the Widow, and shed not innocent Blood in this Place, neither walk after other Gods to your Hurt,* Jer. vii. 4, 5, 6. If Drunkenness reign among you, if Filthiness, Swearing, Oppression,

sion, Cruelty reign among you, your Covenant is but a Lie, all your Professions are but lying Words, and shall never keep you in your Inheritances and Dwellings. The Lord tells you what he requires of you, is it not *to do justly, and love Mercy, and walk humbly with God*? Mic. vi. 8 This is that which *the Grace of God teaches, to deny Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly*, towards your God, your Nerghbour and yourself, Tit. ii. 11, 12. and this he prefers to your publick Ordinances, your fasting, covenanting. preaching and such like.

When the unhappy Distinction betwixt the Publick Resolutioners and Protesters *took Place in this Church, Mr.* Binning *was of the last Denomination. This Distinction proved to be of fatal Consequences, he saw some of the Evils of it in his own Time, and being of a catholick and healing Spirit, with a View to the cementing of Differences, he wrote an excellent Treatise of Christian Love which contains very strong and pathetick Passages most apposite to this Subject, some of which we will have afterwards Occasion to quote. He was no Fomenter of Faction, but studious of the publick Tranquillity; he was a Man of moderate Principles and temperate Passions; he was far from being confident, or vehement in the managing of publick Affairs; never imposing or over-bearing upon others, but willingly hearkned to Advice, and yielded to Reason.*

After he had laboured four Years in the Ministry, serving God with his Spirit in the Gospel of his Son, whom he preached, warning every Man, and teaching every Man *in great ministerial Wisdom and Freedom, that he* might present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus whereanto he laboured, striving according to his working, which wrought in him mightily; *he died of a Consumption, when he was scarce come to the Prime and Vigour of Life, entering on the Twenty sixth Year of his Age, living behind him a sweet Savour after he was gone, and* an Epistle of Commendation upon the Hearts *of his Hearers. While he lived, he was highly valued and esteemed, having been a successful Instrument of saving himself and them that heard him; of turning Sinners unto Righteousness, and of perfecting the Saints; and died much lamented by all good People, who had the Opportunity and Advantage of knowing him: He was a Person of singular Piety, of a humble, meek and peaceable Temper, a judicious and lively Preacher; nay, so extraordinary a Person, that he was justly accounted a Prodigy for the Pregnancy of his*

natural

natural Parts, and his great Proficiency in human Learning, and Knowledge of Divinity. He was too ſhinning a Light to ſhine long, and burned ſo intenſely, that he was ſoon put out; but now ſhines in the Kingdom of his Father, in a more conſpicuous and refulgent Manner, even as the Brightneſs of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever.

The laſt Sermons he preached were theſe on Rom. viii. 14, 15 *Ver.* For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God; for ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry *Abba* Father. *He concluded the laſt of theſe Diſcourſes, with a Reflection on theſe Words*, We cry *Abba* Father. This (*ſays he* Page 360, Col. 1.) is much for our Comfort, that from whomſoever and whatſoever Corner in the World Prayers come up to him, they cannot want Acceptance: All Languages, all Countries, all Places are ſanctified by Jeſus Chriſt, that whoſoever calls upon the Name of the Lord from the Ends of the Earth ſhall be ſaved. And truly it is a ſweet Meditation to think, that from the Ends of the Earth, the Cries of Souls are heard, and that the End is as near Heaven as the Middle, and a Wilderneſs as near as a Paradiſe: That tho' we underſtand not one another, yet we have one loving and living Father, that underſtands all our Meanings; and ſo the different Languages and Dialects of the Members of this Body make no Confuſion in Heaven, but meet together in his Heart and Affection, and are as one Perfume, one Incenſe ſent up from the whole Catholick Church, which is here ſcattered upon the Earth; O that the Lord would perſwade us to cry this Way to our Father in all our Neceſſities. *Thus having contemplated that Subject concerning the Adoption of Children, he was taken hence to the Enjoyment of the Inheritance reſerved in the Heavens for them, and the Spirit called him by Death, as the Voice did* John *the Divine*, Rev. iv. 1. Come up hither.

He was buried in the Church-yard of Govan, *where Mr.* Patrick Gilleſpie, *then Principal of the Univerſity of* Glaſgow, *at his own proper Charges (as I am credibly informed) cauſed a Monument to be erected for him, on which there is to this Day the following Inſcription in* Latin,

HIC

HIC SITUS EST MAGISTER HUGO BINNINGUS;
VIR PIETATE, FACUNDIA, DOCTRINA CLARUS;
PHILOLOGUS, PHILOSOPHUS, THEOLOGUS PRÆSTANS,
PRÆCO DENIQUE EVANGELII FIDELIS ET EXIMIUS;
QUI E MEDIO RERUM CURSU SUBLATUS
ANNO ÆTATIS XXVI DOM. AUTEM 1653.
MUTAVIT PATRIAM NON SOCIETATEM,
EO QUOD VIVUS CUM DEO AMBULAVIT,
ET SI QUID INQUIRAS, CÆTERA SILEO;
CUM NEC TU NEC MARMOR HOC CAPIAT.

He left behind him a disconsolate Widow, and an only Son called John *after the Grandfather, to whom the Grandfather at his Death had left the Estate of* Dalvennan; *but* John *having been engaged in the Insurrection at* Bothwel *Bridge,* Anno 1679, *was forfeited, and continued dispossessed of it, till the Year* 1690, *when by the* 18*th Act of Parliament in the said Year, the Forfeitures and Fines past since the Year* 1665, *to the* 5*th Day of* November 1688, *were rescinded. His Widow was afterwards married to one Mr.* James Gordon, *a Presbyterian Minister for some Time in the Kingdom of* Ireland. *She lived to a great Age, and died in the Year* 1694 *at* Paisley *in the Shire of* Renfrew, *about four or five Miles from* Govan; *which, when the People of that Parish heard, the savoury Memory they still had of their worthy Pastor, made them to desire the Friends of the Defunct, to allow them to give her a decent and honourable Burial besides her deceased Husband, undertaking to defray all the Charges of the Funerals, which was done accordingly; and to this Day Mr.* Binning *is mentioned among them with a particular Veneration: He was succeeded by Mr.* David Vetch, *who likewise died young.*

Before I conclude this Relation, it is proper I give some Account of his Writings. The Books published at different Times under his Name, which are contained in this Volume, are all posthumous; wherefore it will not be strange, if the Reader shall meet with some Passages in them that are less perfect and complete, since he did not intend them for the Press, and that they want these finishing Strokes, which such a masterly Pen was able to give them. The good Effects his Discourses had upon the Hearers, and the Importunity of many judicious and experienced Christians to have them published, that they might have the same Influence on such as should read

them, encouraged some worthy Ministers to revise and print them; and since these Sermons have for a long Time had the Approbation both of learned Divines and serious Christians, they need not any Recommendation of mine.

The first of his Works that was printed, is intituled, The common Principles of the Christian Religion, clearly proved, and singularly improved; or a practical Catechism, wherein some of the most concerning Foundations of our Faith are solidly laid down; and that Doctrine which is according to Godliness is sweetly, yet pungently, pressed home and most satisfyingly handled. *Mr.* M'Ward *speaking of this Performance, says, "That it was not designed for the Press, that it contained only his Notes "upon these Subjects he preached to his Flock, and which he wrote (I sup- "pose he means in a fair Hand) for the private Use and Edification of a "Friend; from whom he had them; and when put into his Hand to be "revised, says, He did not so much as alter or add one Word to make the "Sense more plain, full or emphatical." This Book is an excellent Exposition of the* Westminister *Catechism, so far as it goes,* viz. *to the twenty first Question,* Who is the Redeemer of God's Elect? *Mr.* Patrick Gillespie *writes a Preface to the Reader, wherein he expresses his high Opinion of it in the following Encomium. "In this Book Mr.* Bin- "ning *explains many of the fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith, "and had he lived to have perfected and finished this Work, he had been upon "this single Account famous in the Church of Christ." The Assembly's Catechism has had many Expositions by pious and learned Ministers, some of them by way of Sermon, and others by way of Question and Answer; but this, so far as it goes, is not inferior to any. A learned Layman, Sir* Matthew Hales *Chief Justice of the King's Bench, the Divine of the State in King* Charles II's. *Reign, judged the Assembly's Catechism to be an excellent Composure, and thought it not below him, or unworthy of his Pains, to consider it: For in the second Part of his* Contemplations moral and divine, *we have his most instructive Meditations upon the three first Questions: These had been the Employment of his* horæ sacræ; *and it is a Pity he did not go on to the other Questions. The Shortness of Mr.* Binning's *Life has deprived us of a complete Course of useful catechetical Discourses. This Book was so greatly esteemed in this Country, that before the Year* 1718, *there had been no less than five Impressions cast off the Press; and all these being sold off, a sixth was made in the said Year. As they were much valued at home, so they were highly prized abroad:*

and

and as an Evidence of this, I find that Mr. James Coleman *Minister at* Sluys *in* Flanders, *translated them into the* Dutch Language.

In the Year 1670, *another posthumous Work was printed, it is intituled* The Sinner's Sanctuary, being forty Sermons upon the eight Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans from the first Ver. down to the sixteenth. The Publishers in their Preface acquaint us, that they were incouraged to print it, because the former Treatise was universally received by the intelligent and judicious in the Principles of the Christian Faith. In this Book, as in all his other Writings, the Readers will perceive a pure Stream of Piety and Learning running through the whole, and a very peculiar Turn of Thought, that exceeds the common Rate of Writers on this Choice Part of the Holy Scriptures. Dr.* Horton, *Dr.* Manton, *and others have printed a great Number of useful practical Discourses; but so far as he goes, he is not exceeded by any of them.*

A third Treatise was printed at Edinburgh, *in the Year* 1671, *the Title of it is,* Fellowship with God, being twenty eight Sermons on the first Epistle of *John*, Chap. 1st, and Chap. 2d, Verses 1, 2, 3. *In this Book we have the true Ground and Foundation of attaining the spiritual Way of entertaining Fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and the blessed Condition of such as attain to it, most succinctly and distinctly explained. This Book was revised and published by one* A. S. *who in his Preface to the Reader, stiles himself his Servant in the Gospel of our dearest Lord and Saviour. I need give no other Commendation of it, than that summary Elogium which that Minister has left us.* "*In a Word, says he,* "*here are to be found, Convictions for Atheists, piercing Rebukes to the Pro-*"*fane, clear Instructions to the Ignorant, Milk to the Babes in Christ, strong* "*Meat for the Strong, Strength to the Weak, Quickning and Reviving for such* "*as faint in the Way, Restoratives for such are in a Decay, Reclamations* "*and loud Oyesses after Backsliders to recal them, Breasts of Consolation* "*for* Zion's *Mourners; and to add no more, here are most excellent Counsels* "*and Directions to serious Seekers of Fellowship with God, to guide them in* "*their Way, and help them forward to the Attainments of that Fulness* "*of Joy, which is to be had in Fellowship with the Father and the Son.*"

The last Treatise that has been printed is, His Heart humiliation, or Miscellany Sermons, preached upon some choice Texts at several solemn Occasions. *These likewise were revised and published by the above* A. S. *in the Year* *Mr.* Binning *considering the great Confusions and lamentable Divisions that prevailed in the Church in his Day, and the abounding Immorality and Profaneness of the Age, was deeply weighted there-*

therewith. His righteous Soul was so vexed and grieved on these Accounts, That he vented his Mind in a most pathetick and moving Manner, when the Days of publick Humiliation and Fasting were observed. With respect to the many Fasts then appointed, and the few good Effects they had, he says in his Sermon on Isa. lxiv. 7. "*There is none that calleth upon thy "Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold on thee,*" Page 623, Col. 2. The fasting Days of *Scotland* will be numbred in the Roll of greatest Provocations, because there is no real Conviction of Sin among us; Custom now hath taken away the Solemnity, and there remaineth nothing but the very Name. *And in the same Sermon,* Page 634, Col. 1. Doth any of you pray more in private than ye used? Or what Edge is upon your Prayers? Alas the Lord will yet get good Leave to go from us. It feareth me we would give Christ a Testimonial to go over Seas. Hold him, hold him; nay the Multitude would be gladly quite of him, they cannot abide his Yoke, his Work is a Burden, his Word is a Torment, his Discipline is Bands and Cords, and what Heart can ye have to keep Christ! What Violence can ye offer to Christ to hold him still? All your Entreaties may be fair Compliments, but they would never rent his Garment. *There are still several Manuscripts of* Mr. Binning *carefully preserved, which are in nothing inferior to any of his printed Works. There is a valuable Treatise upon* Christian Love, *consisting of several Sheets, writ in a very small Character, it is divided into Chapters, and several Sermons to the Number of upon very edifying Subjects useful and profitable for our Times, which are designed to be printed in a separate Volume, which every Body may easily discover from the Stile and Genious of the Author to be his genuine Writings: His Manner of thinking and writing being a Talent so peculiar to himself, that it scarcely can be imitated by any other Person.*

Had it pleased the Almighty to have spared so valuable a Life for some Time longer, he would have vindicated Divinity from the many fruitless Questions, unintelligible Terms, empty Notions, and perplexed Subtilities, wherewith it had been corrupted for a long Time by the Schoolmen; as he was excellently fitted for this, so it was much upon his Heart to have reduced Divinity to that native Simplicity, which had been lost in most Parts of the World. A good Specimen of his Ability this Way he hath given us in his Catechism; and so, tho' he lived but a short Time, yet lived long enough to raise the greatest Expectation, that hath been known of any of his Standing.

Mr.

Mr. M'Ward *assures us, That if Dr.* Strang's *Dictates* de voluntate Dei circa peccata *had been published before Mr.* Binning's *Death, Mr.* Binning *had an* Examen *of them ready for the Press; but this Treasure, to the great Loss of the learned World, cannot now be found. As for his Philosophical Writings which he taught in the University, I am assured that his Course of Philosophy is in the Hands of a learned Gentlemen in this City, who gives them a high Commendation.*

There is a Book published under his Name in Quarto, *consisting of fifty one Pages, with this Title,* An useful Case of Conscience, learnedly and accurately discussed and resolved concerning Associations and Confederacies, with Idolaters, Infidels, Heretick*s*, Malignants, or any other known Enemies of Truth and Godliness: *But it is very much questioned by the most intelligent, if that Book was really Mr.* Binning's. *The Publisher does indeed put Mr.* Binning's *Name to the Title Page, but conceals his own, and brings no Manner of Voucher, showing that Mr.* Binning *was the Author, but sends it abroad into the World in a clandestine Manner; neither the Name of the Printer, nor of the Place where it was printed is mentioned in the Title Page. It is printed in the Year* 1693, *when the first General Assembly of this Church after the Revolution, which consisted of both* publick Resolutioners *and* Protestors, *had agreed to bury for ever all their Differences about the publick Resolutions, concerning the Question of employing Malignants in the Army that was raised against the Kingdom of* England. *It seems that he dreaded the Frowns and Censure of those worthy and faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ, who had been a long Time in the Fire of Persecution. But if we further consider, That our late glorious Deliverer King* William, *was in the Year* 1693 *engaged in a defensive War with the Emperor of* Germany *and the King of* Spain, *against* Louis XIV. *the bloody Tyrant of* France *and Terror of* Europe, *who aimed at the universal Monarchy thereof, and to overturn the happy Revolution, the blessed Benefits of which we have enjoyed ever since, it is evident, That the Publisher was afraid of the Resentment of the civil Powers, especially when the spreading of that Pamphlet might have an unhappy Tendency to alienate the Affections of his Subjects when he was carrying on that just and necessary War for the Preservation of our religious and civil Liberties, to which we had been but lately restored; nay it is said, that when this Pamphlet was spreading in the Army in* Flanders, *it was like to have a bad Influence on the Soldiers, which made King* William *to take an effectual Method to Supprefs*

preſs it. Further, Mr. Binning *died in the Year* 1653, *and this Pamphlet was not publiſhed till the Year* 1693; *ſo that for the Space of forty Years it was never heard of, nor made publick by any of the Proteſtors themſelves in that Period, which would not have been neglected, had they known that Mr.* Binning *was the Author of it. And* laſtly, *Mr.* Binning *was of a pacifick Temper, and his Sentiments with reſpect to publick Differences were healing, which are evident from the Accounts already given of his printed Books. And to ſhew that he was a Promoter of brotherly Love, and of the Peace of the Church, I ſhall ſet down a few Paſſages taken from his Treatiſe of Chriſtian Love, which are as bright and ſtrong for recommending the ſame, as any that I have met with in the Writings of any of our Divines, ſo that I can't allow my ſelf to think he could be the Author thereof. In* Chapter 2*d of that Treatiſe, he ſays, "There is a greater Mo-*
"*ment and Weight of Chriſtianity in Charity, than in the moſt Part of theſe*
"*Things, for which Chriſtians bite and devour one another: It is the funda-*
"*mental Law of the Goſpel, to which all poſitive Precepts and Ordinances*
"*ſhould ſtoup. Unity in Judgment is very needful for the Well-being of*
"*Chriſtians; but Chriſt's laſt Words perſwade this, that Unity in Affection*
"*is more eſſential and fundamental: This is the Badge he left to his Diſciples.*
"*If we caſt away this upon every different Apprehenſion of Mind, we diſ-*
"*own our Maſter, and diſclaim his Token and Badge." He goes on in the ſame Strain in the following Paragraph; "The Apoſtle* Paul *puts a high*
"*Note and Commendation upon Charity, when he Stiles it the* Bond of Per-
"fection. Above all Things, *ſays he,* put on Charity, which is the
"Bond of Perfectneſs, *Col.* iii. 14. *I am ſure it hath not ſo high a Place*
"*in the Minds and Practices of Chriſtians now, as it hath in the Rolls of*
"*the Parts and Members of the new Man here ſet down: Here it is* above
"all, *with us 'tis* below all, *even below every Apprehenſion of doubtful*
"*Truths. An Agreement in the Conception of any poor petty controverſial*
"*Matter of the Times, is made the Badge of Chriſtianity; and ſet in an*
"*eminent Place above all. And in the ſame* Chapter, *he adds, This is the*
"*Sum of all, to worſhip God in Faith and Purity, and to love one another;*
"*and whatſoever Debates and Queſtions tend to the Breach of this Bond,*
"*and have no eminent and remarkable Advantage in them, ſuppoſe they*
"*be conceived to be about Matters of Conſcience, yet the intertaining and*
"*proſecuting of them to the Prejudice of this, is a manifeſt Violence offered*
"*to the Law of God, which is the Rule of Conſcience. It is a perverting of*
"*Scripture and Conſcience to a wrong End. I ſay then, that Charity and*

Chriſtia

" *Christian Love should be the Moderatrix of all our Actions towards Men;*
" *from thence they should proceed, and according to this Rule be formed.*
" *I am perswaded if this Rule were followed, the present Differences in*
" *Judgment of godly Men, about such Matters as minister more Questions,*
" *would soon be buried in the Gulf of Christian Affection.*" *I shall mention only another in the same* Chapter, ' *Is not Charity more excellent than*
" *the Knowledge and Acknowledgement of some present questionable Matters*
" *about Government, Treaties, and such like, and far more than every*
" *Punctilio of them? But the Apostle goes higher, Suppose a Man could*
" *spend all his Substance upon the Maintenance of such an Opinion, and*
" *give his Life for the Defence of it, tho' in itself it be commendable: Yet*
" *if he want Charity and Love to his Brethren; if he overstretch that*
" *Point of Conscience to the Breach of Christian Affection, and Duties fol-*
" *lowing from it, it profits him nothing; then certainly Charity must rule*
" *our external Actions, and have the predominant Hand in the Use of all*
" *Gifts, and in the venting of all Opinions.*" *And now having given a just Character of this eminent Minister of the Gospel, a true Account of his Life, and some slight Remarks upon his Writings; I shall no longer detain the Reader from the Perusal of these Treatises that are contained in this Volume, from which you will know more of Mr.* Binning, *than from all that I and others have said in his just Praise. I shall now conclude, by acquainting the Purchasers and Readers of this Volume, that I am allowed by the Publishers to assure them, that the rest of his practical Manuscripts are a revising for the Press; and that with all Expedition they shall be printed, from which I am hopeful they shall receive as great Satisfaction, as from any of his Pieces already published.*

THE

The Common Principles of the *Christian Religion* clearly proved, and singularly improved: or, a practical Catechism, *&c.*

Of the chief End of Man.

Rom. xi. 36. *Of Him, and through Him, and for Him, are all things: To whom be Glory for ever.* And 1 Cor. x. 13. *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.*

ALL that Men have to know, may be comprised under these two Heads, what their End is, and what is the right Way to attain to that End: And all that we have to do, is, by any Means to seek to compass that End. These are the two cardinal Points of a Man's Knowledge and Exercise; *Quo, & qua eundum est, Whither* to go, and *what way* to go. If there be a Mistake in any of these Fundamentals, all is wrong. All Arts and Sciences have their Principles and Grounds, that must be presupposed to all solid Knowledge and right Practice; so hath the true Religion some fundamental Principles, which must be laid to Heart, and imprinted into the Soul, or there can be no Superstructure of true and saving Knowledge; and no Practice in Christianity that can lead to a blessed End. But as the Principles are not many, but a few common and easie Grounds, from which all the Conclusions of Art are reduced; so the Principles of true Religion are few, and plain. They need neither burden your Memory, nor confound your Understanding; that which may save you *is near Hand*, says the Apostle, *Rom. x. in thy Mouth*: It is neither too far above us, nor too far below us. But alas! Your not considering of those common, and few and easie Grounds, makes them both burdensome to the Memory, and dark to the Understanding. As there is nothing so easy, but it becomes difficult, if you do it against your Will, *nihil est tam facile, quin difficile fiat, si invitus feceris*: So there is nothing so plain, so common, but it becomes dark and hard, if you do not indeed consider it, and lay it to Heart.

That which is in the first Place to be considered, is, our End. As in all other Arts, and every petty Business, it hath the first Place of Consideration, so especially in the Christian Religion. It is the first

Cauſe of all humane Actions, and the firſt Principle of all deliberate Motions. Except you would walk at random, not knowing whither you go, or what you do, you muſt once eſtabliſh this and fix it in your Intention, what is the great End and Purpoſe wherefore I am created, and ſent into the World? If this be not either queſtioned, or not rightly conſtituted; you cannot but ſpend your Time, *Vel nihil agendo, vel aliud agendo, vel male agendo*, you muſt either do nothing, or nothing to Purpoſe, or, that which is worſe, that which will undo you. It is certainly the wrong eſtabliſhing of this one Thing, that makes the moſt Part of our Motions, either altogether irregular, or unprofitable, or deſtructive and hurtful: Therefore, as this Point hath the firſt Place in your Catechiſm, ſo it ought to be firſt of all laid to Heart, and pondered as the one neceſſary Thing. *One thing is needful*, ſays Chriſt, *Luk.* x. 42. And if any thing be in a ſuperlative Degree needful, this is it. O that you would chuſe to conſider it, as the Neceſſity and Weight of it requires.

We have read two Scriptures, which ſpeak to the ultimate and chief End of Man, which is the glorifying of God by all our Actions, and Words, and Thoughts. In which we have theſe Things of Importance: 1. That God's Glory is the End of our *Being*. 2. That God's Glory ſhould be the End of our *Doing*. And 3. The Ground of both theſe, becauſe both Being and Doing are *from Him*, therefore they ought to be both *for Him*. He is the firſt Cauſe of both, and therefore he ought to be the laſt End of both. *Of him, and through him, are all Things*, and therefore all Things *are alſo for Him*, and therefore all Things *ſhould be done to Him*.

God is independent altogether, and ſelf-ſufficient: This is his royal Prerogative, wherein he infinitely tranſcends all created Perfection: *He is of himſelf, and for himſelf*, from no other, and for no other, *but of him, and for him are all Things*. He is the Fountain-Head; you ought to follow the Streams up to it, and then to reſt: For you can go no farther. But the Creature, even the moſt perfect Work beſides God, it hath theſe two Ingredients of *Limitation* and *Imperfection* in its Boſom: *It is from another, and for another*. It hath its Riſe out of the Fountain of God's immenſe Power and Goodneſs, and it muſt run towards that again, till it empty all its Faculties and Excellencies, into that ſame Sea of Goodneſs. Dependence is the proper Notion of a created Being: Dependence upon that infinite independent Being, as the firſt immediate Cauſe, and the laſt immediate End: You ſee then, that this Principle is engraven in the very Nature of Man. It is as certain and evident, that Man is made for God's Glory, and for no other End, as that he is from God's Power, and from no other Cauſe: Except Men did violent their own Conſcience, and put out their own Eyes, as the Gentiles did, *Rom.* i. 19. &c. *That which might be known* of Mans chief End, *is manifeſt in them, ſo that all Men are without Excuſe*. As God his Being is independent, ſo that he cannot be expreſſed by any Name, more ſuitable than ſuch as he takes to himſelf, *I am that I am*: Importing a boundleſs, ineffable, abſolute, and tranſcendent Being, beſide which, no Creature deſerves ſo much as to have the Name of Being, or to be made Mention of in one Day with his Name; becauſe his glorious Light makes the poor derived Shadow of Light in other Creatures, to diſappear, and to evaniſh out of

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the World of Beings: So it is the glorious Perfection of his Nature, that he doth all Things for himself, for his own Name, *Prov.* xiv. 4. and his Glory is as dear to him, as himself, *Isa.* xlii. 8. *I am the Lord, that is my Name, and therefore my Glory will I give to no other*, and xlviii. 11. This is no Ambition. Indeed, for a Man to seek his own Glory, or *search into it, is no Glory*, Prov. xxv. 27. but rather a Man's Shame: Self-seeking in Creatures, is a monstrous and incongruous Thing; it is as absurd, and unbeseeming a Creature, to seek its own Glory, as to attribute to it self its own Being. Shall the Thing formed, say to the Potter, *Thou hast not made me*? That were ridiculous: And shall the Thing formed say; *'Tis made for itself*? That were as ridiculous. Self-denial is the Ornament and Beauty of a Creature, and therefore Humility is an Ornament and Cloathing, 1 *Pet.* v. 5. And *Honour upholds the humble in Spirit*, Prov. xxix. 23. But God's Self-seeking, and seeking of his own Glory, is his eminent Excellency: It is indeed his Glory, because he is, and there is none else, there is nothing beside Him, but that which hath issued forth from his incomprehensible Fulness: And therefore it is all the Reason of the World, that as he is the *Beginning*, so he should be the *End* of all Things, *Rev.* i. 8. And there is the more Reason of it, that his Majesty's seeking of his own Glory, is not prejudicial to the Creature's Good, but the very Communication of his Fulness goes along with it: So that in glorifying Himself, he is most beneficial to his own Creatures. Poor Creatures, indigent at Home, yet are proud of nothing, and endeavour in seeking of themselves, to ingross all Perfections into their own Bosoms: Ambition, and Vain-glory, robs and spoils others Excellencies, to cloath it self withal; and then boasts it self in these borrowed Feathers. But our blessed Lord is then doing most for our Advantage, when he does all for his own Glory; He needs not go abroad to seek Perfection, but to manifest what he is in Himself: He communicates of Himself to us. O blessed Self-seeking, that gave us a Being and Well-being, that makes no Advantage by it, but gives Advantage. He hath the Honour of all, but we have the Profit of all.

All Things are of Him, and for Him; but Man in a peculiar and proper Way. As God in making of Man, he was pleased of his Goodness, to stamp him with a Character of his own Image, and in this he puts a Difference between Man and other Creatures; that he should have more plain and distinct Engravings of Divine Majesty upon him, which might shew the Glory of the Work-man: So it appears that he is in a singular Way made for God, as his last End. As he is set nearer God, as the Beginning and Cause than other Creatures; so he is placed nearer God as the End. All Creatures are made *ultimo, lastly* for God, yet they are all made *proxime, nextly* for Man: Therefore *David* falls out a wondring, *O Lord what is Man that thou magnifiest him, and hast given him Dominion over the Works of thy Hands, and put all Things under his Feet*! Psal. viii. 6. The Creature comes out in a direct Line from God, as the Beams from the Body of the Sun, and it is directed towards the Use and Service of Mankind, from whom all the Excellency and Perfection that is in it should reflect towards God again. Man is both *proxime & ultimo* for God. We are to return immediately to the Fountain of our Being;

and thus our Happineſs and Well-being is perpetuated. There is nothing Interveening between God and us, that our Uſe and Service and Honour ſhould be directed towards: But all the Songs and Perfections of the Creature, that are among the reſt of the Creatures, meet all in Man as their Centre, for this Purpoſe, that he may return with them all to the glorious Fountain from whence they iſſued: Thus we ſtand next God, and in the middle between God and other Creatures. This, I ſay, was the Condition of our Creation; we had our Being immediately from God, as the Beginning of all, and we were to have our Happineſs and Well-being by returning immediately to God as the End of all. But Sin coming in between God and us, hath diſplaced us, ſo that we cannot now ſtand next God, without the Intervention of a Mediator, and we cannot ſtand between God and Creatures, to offer up their Praiſes to him; but there is one Mediator between God and Man, that offers up both Mans Praiſes and the Creatures Songs which meet in Man.

Now ſeeing God hath made all Things for himſelf, and eſpecially Man for his own Glory, that he may ſhew forth in him the Glory and Excellency of his Power, Goodneſs, Holineſs, Juſtice, and Mercy: It is not only moſt reaſonable that Man ſhould do all Things that he doth to the Glory of God, but it is even the Beauty and Perfection of a Man, the greateſt Acceſſion that can be to his Being, to glorify God by that Being. We are not our own, therefore we ought not to live to our ſelves, but to God whoſe we are.

But you may ask, What is it to glorify God? Doth our Goodneſs extend to him? Or, is it an Advantage to the Almighty, that we are righteous? No indeed: And herein is the vaſt Difference between God's glorifying of us, and ſanctifying of us, and our glorifying and ſanctifying of him: *God calls Things that are not, and makes them to be*; but we can do no more, but call things that are, and that far below what they are. God's glorifying is creative, ours only declarative. He makes us ſuch, we do no more but declare him to be ſuch: This then is the proper Work that Man is created for, to be a Witneſs of God's Glory, and to give Teſtimony to the Appearances, and Outbreakings of it, in the Ways of Power, and Juſtice, and Mercy, and Truth. Other Creatures are called to glorify God, but it is rather a Proclamation to dull and ſenſeleſs Men, and a Provocation of them to their Duty. As Chriſt ſaid to the Phariſees, *If theſe Children hold their Peace, the Stones would cry out*: So may the Lord turn himſelf from ſtupid and ſenſeleſs Man, to the Stones, and Woods, and Seas, and Sun, and Moon, and exhort them to Mans Duty, the more to provoke and ſtir up our Dulneſs, and to make us conſider, that it is a greater Wonder, that Man whom God hath made ſo glorious, can ſo little expreſs God's Glory; than if ſtupid and ſenſeleſs Creatures ſhould break out in ſinging, and praiſing of his Majeſty. The Creatures are the Books wherein the Lines of the Song of God's Praiſes are written, and Man is made a Creature capable to read them, and to tune that Song. They are appointed to bring in Brick to our Hand, and God has faſhioned us for this Imployment, to make ſuch a Building of it: We are the Mouth of the Creation, but e're God want Praiſes when our Mouth is dumb, and our Ears deaf, God will open the Mouths of Aſſes, of Babes and Sucklings, and in them perfect Praiſes, *Pſal.* viii. 1, 2. *Epictetus* ſaid well, *Si Luſcinia*

Luſcinia eſſem, canerem ut Luſcinia; cum autem homo ſim, quid agam? Laudabo Deum, nec unquam ceſſabo. If I were a Lark, I would ſing as a Lark; but ſeeing I am a Man, what ſhould I do, but praiſe God without ceaſing? It is as proper to us to praiſe God, as for a Bird to chaunt: All Beaſts have their own Sounds, and Voices peculiar to their own Nature; this is the natural Sound of a Man. Now as you would think it monſtrous to hear a melodious Bird croping as a Raven; ſo it is no leſs monſtrous and degenerate, to hear the moſt Part of the Diſcourſes of Men, ſavouring nothing of God. If we had known that innocent Eſtate of Man, O how would we think he had fallen from Heaven! We would imagine that we were thruſt down from Heaven, where we heard the melodious Songs of Angels, into Hell, to hear the Howlings of damned Spirits. This then is that we are bound unto, by the Bond of our Creation; this is our proper Office, and Station God once ſet us into, when he aſſigned every Creature its own Uſe and Exerciſe: This was our Portion (and O the nobleſt of all, becauſe neareſt the King's own Perſon) to acknowledge in our Hearts inwardly, and to expreſs in our Words and Actions outwardly, what a one he is, according as he hath revealed himſelf in his Word, and Works: 'Tis great Honour to a Creature to have the meaneſt Employment in the Court of this great King. But, O what is it to be ſet over all the King's Houſe, and over all his Kingdom? But then what is that, in reſpect of this, to be next to the King, to wait on his own Perſon (ſo to ſpeak:) Therefore the godly Man is deſcribed, as a waiting Maid, or Servant, *Pſal.* cxxiii. 2. Well then, without more Diſcourſe upon it, without multiplying of it into particular Branches, To glorify God, *is in our Souls to conceive of him, and meditate on his Name, till they receive the Impreſſion and Stamp of all the Letters of his glorious Name; and then to expreſs this in our Words and Actions, in commending of him, and obeying of him.* Our Soul ſhould be as Wax to expreſs the Seal of his glorious Attributes of Juſtice, Power, Goodneſs, Holineſs, and Mercy: And as the Water that receives the Beams of the Sun, reflects them back again, ſo ſhould our Spirits receive the ſweet warming Beams of his Love and glorious Excellency, and then reflect them towards his Majeſty, with the Deſires and Affections of our Souls. All our Thoughts of him, all our Affections towards him, ſhould have the Stamp of Singularity, ſuch as may declare there is none like him, none beſides him; our Love, our Meditation, our Acknowledgement ſhould have this Character on their Front; *There is none beſides Thee,* Thou art, and none elſe: And then a Soul ſhould by the Cords of Affection to him, and Admiration of him, be bound to ſerve him. Creation puts on the Obligation to glorify him in our Body and Spirits, which are his; but Affection only puts that to Exerciſe: All other Bonds leave our Natures at Liberty, but this conſtrains, 2 *Cor.* v. 13. it binds on all Bonds, it ties on us all divine Obligations. Then a Soul will glorify God, when Love ſo unites it to God, and makes it one Spirit with him, that his Glory becomes its Honour, and becomes the Principle of all our inward Affections, and outward Actions. It is not always poſſible to have and expreſs particular Thoughts of God, and his Glory, in every Action, and Meditation; but, for the moſt Part, it ought to be ſo: And if Souls were accuſtomed to Meditation on

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God, it would become their very Nature, *altera natura*, pleaſant and delightſome. However, if there be not always an expreſs Intention of God's Glory, yet there ought to be keep'd always ſuch a Diſpoſition and Temper of Spirit, as it may be conſtrued to proceed from the Intention of God's Glory; and then it remains in the Seed and Fruit, if not in itſelf.

Now when we are ſpeaking of the great End and Purpoſe of our Creation, we call to mind our lamentable and tragical Fall from that bleſſed Station we were conſtitute into. *All Men have ſinned and come ſhort of the Glory of God*, Rom. iii. 23. His being in the world was for that Glory, and he is come ſhort of that Glory: O ſtrange Shortcoming! Short of all that he was ordained for! What is he now meet for? For what Purpoſe is that Chief of the Works of God now? The Salt if it loſe its Saltneſs is meet for nothing, for wherewithall ſhall it be ſeaſoned? *Mark* ix. 50. Even ſo, when Man is rendred unfit for his proper End, he is meet for nothing, but to be caſt out and trode upon, he is like a withered Branch that muſt be caſt into the Fire, *John* xv. 6. Some Things if they fail in one Uſe, they are good for another: But the beſt Things are not ſo, *Corruptio optimi, peſſima*. As the Lord ſpeaks to the Houſe of Iſrael, *Shall Wood be taken of the Vine Tree for any Work? Even ſo the Inhabitants of Jeruſalem*, Ezek. xv. 2, 3, 4, 5. If it yield not Wine, 'tis good for nothing: So, if Man do not glorify God, if he fall from that, he is meet for nothing, but to be caſt into the Fire of Hell, and burnt for ever; he is for no Uſe in the Creation, but to be Fuel to the Fire of the Lord's Indignation.

But behold! the Goodneſs of the Lord and his Kindneſs and Love hath appeared toward Man, *not by Works of Righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his Mercy he ſaved us through Jeſus Chriſt*, Tit. iii. 4, 5: Our Lord Jeſus, by whom all Things were created, and for whom, would not let this excellent Workmanſhip periſh ſo, therefore he goes about the Work of Redemption: A ſecond Creation more laborious and alſo more glorious than the firſt, that ſo he might glorify his Father, and our Father: Thus the Breach is made up, thus the unſavory Salt is ſeaſoned, thus the withered Branch is quickened again for that ſame Fruit of Praiſes and glorifying of God. This is the End of his ſecond Creation, as it was of the firſt; *We are his Workmanſhip created to good Works in Chriſt Jeſus*, Eph. ii. 10. This is the Work of God, to believe in him, to ſet to our Seal, and to give our Teſtimony to all his Attributes, *John* vi. 29, and iii. 33. We are bought with a Price, and therefore we ought to glorify him with our Souls and Bodies; he made us with a Word, and that bound us, but now he has made us again and paid a Price for us, and ſo we are twice bound not to be our own but his, 1 *Cor.* vi. ult. *And ſo to glorify him in our Bodies and Spirits*. I beſeech you gather your Spirits, call them home about the Buſineſs. We once came ſhort of our End, God's Glory and our Happineſs; but know, that it is attainable again: We loſt both, but both are found in Chriſt. Awake then and ſtir up your Spirits, elſe it ſhall be double Condemnation, when we have the Offer of being reſtored to our former bleſſed Condition, to love our preſent Miſery better. Once eſtabliſh this Point within your Souls, and therefore ask, Why came I hither? To what purpoſe am I come into the World? If you do not ask it, what will you anſwer, when

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he asks you at your Appearance before his Tribunal? I beseech you what will many of you say in that Day, when the Master returns and takes an Account of your Dispensation? You are sent into the World only for this Business, to serve the Lord: Now what will many of you answer? If you speak the Truth (as then you must do it, you cannot lie then) you must say, Lord, I spent my Time in serving my own Lusts, I was taken up with other Businesses, and had no Leisure, I was occupied in my Calling, &c. Even as if an Ambassador of a King should return him this Account of his Negotiation, I was busy at Cards and Dice, I spent my Money, and did wear my Cloaths. Though you think your plowing, and borrowing, and trafficking, and reaping very necessary, yet certainly these are but as Trifles and Toys to the main Business. O what a dreadful Account will Souls make! they come here for no Purpose but to serve their Bodies and Senses, to be Slaves to all the Creatures, which were once put under Man's Feet: Now Man is under the Feet of all, and he has put himself so. If you were *of these* Creatures, then you might be *for them:* You seek them as if you were created for them, and not they for you, and you seek yourselves, as if you were *of yourselves*, and had not your descent *of God*. Know, my beloved, that you were not made for that Purpose, nor yet redeemed either to serve yourselves, or other Creatures, but that other Creatures might serve you, and ye serve God, *Luke* i. 74, 75. And this is really the best Way to serve ourselves, and to save ourselves, to serve God: Self-seeking is Self-destroying; Self-denying, is Self-saving, Soul-saving: *He that seeketh to save his Life shall lose it, and he that loseth his Life shall find it, and he that denies himself and follows me, is my Disciple.* Will ye once sit down in good earnest about this Business. 'Tis lamentable to be yet to begin to learn to live, when ye must die: Ye will be out of the World almost, e're ye bethink yourself, Why came I into the World? *Quidam tunc vivere incipiunt, cum desinendum est; imo quidam ante vivere desierunt quam inciperent*; this is of all most lamentable, many Souls end their Life, before they begin to live. For what is our Life, but a living Death, while we do not live to God, and while we live not in relation to the great End of our Life and Being? the Glory of God. It were better, says Christ, that such had never been born. You who are created again in Jesus Christ, it most of all concerns you to ask, Why am I made? And why am I redeemed? And to what Purpose? It is certainly, that ye may glorify your heavenly Father, *Mat.* v. 16. *Psal.* lviii 13. And you shall glorifie him if you bring forth much Fruit, and continue in his love, *John* xv. 8. And this you are chosen and ordained unto, *ver.* 16. and therefore abide in him, that ye may bring forth Fruit, *ver.* 4. And if you abide in him by believing, you do indeed honour him, and he that honoureth the Son honoureth the Father *John* v. 23. Here is a compendious Way to glorify God: Receive Salvation of him freely, Righteousness and eternal Life, and this sets to a Seal to God's Truth, and Grace and Mercy; and whoso counts the Son worthy to be a Saviour to them, and sets to their Seal of Approbation to him whom God the Father hath sent and sealed, he also honours the Father, and then he that honoureth the Father, hath it not for nothing, *for them that honour me, I will honour,* 1 Sam. ii. 30. says the Lord; And *he that serves me, him will my Fa-*

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ther honour, John xii. 26. As the believing Soul cares for no other, and reſpects no other but God, ſo he reſpects no other, but ſuch a Soul. I will dwell in the humble, and look unto the contrite; there is mutual Reſpects and Honours. God is the Delight of ſuch a Soul, and ſuch a Soul is God's Delight: That Soul ſets God in a high Place, in a Throne in its Heart, and God ſets that Soul in a heavenly Place with Chriſt, *Eph.* ii. 6. yea he comes down to ſit with us, and dwells in us, off his Throne of Majeſty, *Iſa.* lxvi. 1, 2. and lvii. 15.

Pſal. lxxiii. 24. to the End. *Thou wilt guide me with thy Counſel*, &c. *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee?* &c. *It is good for me to draw near to God.* 1 John i. 3. *Theſe Things declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have Fellowſhip with us: And truly our Fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* And John xvii. 21, 22, 23. *That they all may be one as we are one. I in them, and they in me, that they may be perfect in one*, &c.

IT is a Matter of great Conſolation, that God's Glory and our Happineſs are linked together: So that whoever ſets his Glory before them ſingly to aim at, they take the moſt compendious and certain Way to true Bleſſedneſs. His Glory is the ultimate End of Man, and ſhould be our great and laſt Scope; but our Happineſs, which conſiſts in the Enjoyment of God, is ſubordinate to this, yet inſeparable from it. The End of our Creation is Communion and Fellowſhip with God, therefore Man was made with an immortal Soul capable of it: And this is the greateſt Dignity and Eminency of Man above the Creatures. He hath not only impreſſed from God's Finger, in his firſt Moulding, ſome Characters reſembling God, in Righteouſneſs and Holineſs; but is created with a Capacity of receiving more of God, by Communion with him. Other Creatures have already all they will have, all they can have, of Conformity to him; but Man is made liker than all, and is fitted and faſhioned to aſpire to more Likeneſs and Conformity, ſo that his Soul may ſhine more and more to the perfect Day.

There was an Union made already in his firſt Moulding, and Communion was to grow as a fragrant and ſweet Fruit out of this bleſſed Root. Union and Similitude is the Ground of Fellowſhip and Communion. That Union was gracious, that Communion would have been glorious; for Grace is the Seed of Glory. There was a twofold Union between *Adam* and God, an *Union of State*, and an *Union of Nature*: He was like God, and he was God's Friend. All the Creatures had ſome Likeneſs to God, ſome Engravings of his Power, and Goodneſs, and Wiſdom: But Man, is ſaid to be made according to God's Image, *Let us make Man like unto Us.* Other Creatures had *ſimilitudinem veſtigii*, but Man had *ſimilitudinem faciei.* Holineſs and Righteouſneſs is God's Face, the very Excellency and Glory of all his Attributes, and the Lord

Lord ſtamps the Image of theſe upon Man. Other Attributes are but like his Back-parts, and he leaves the Reſemblance of his Footſteps upon other Creatures. What can be ſo beautiful as the Image of God upon the Soul? Creatures, the nearer they are to God, the more pure and excellent. We ſee in the Fabrick of the World, Bodies the higher they are, the more pure and cleanly, the more beautiful. Now then, What was Man that was made a little lower that the Angels? In the Hebrew, a little *lower than God, tantum non Deus.* Seeing Man is ſet next to God, his Glory and Beauty certainly ſurpaſſes the Glory of the Sun and Heavens. Things contiguous and next other are like other; The Water is liker Air than the Earth, therefore it is next the Air: The Air is liker Heaven than Water, therefore is it next to it. *Omne contiguum ſpirituali, eſt ſpirituale.* Angels and Men next God, are Spirits, as He is a Spirit. Now Similitude is the Ground of Friendſhip. *Pares paribus congregantur, ſimilitudo neceſſitudinis vinculum.* It is that which concilitates Affections among Men: So it is here by Proportion: God ſees all is very good, and that Man beſt of his Works; and he loves him, and makes him his Friend, for his own Image which he beholds in him.

At length from theſe two Roots this pleaſant and fragrant Fruit of Communion with, and Enjoyment of God, grows up: This is the Entertainment of Friends, to delight in one another, and to enjoy one another, *Amicorum omnia communia.* Love makes all common, it opens the Treaſure of God's Fulneſs, and makes a Vent of divine Bounty towards Man, and it opens the Heart of Man, and makes it large as the Sand of the Sea to receive of God. Our receiving of his Fulneſs, is all the Entertainment we can give him. O what Bleſſedneſs is this, for a Soul to live in him, and it lives in him when it loves him, *Anima eſt ubi amat, non ubi animat,* and to taſte of his Sweetneſs and be ſatisfied with him, this makes perfect Oneneſs: And perfect Oneneſs with God (who is the Fountain of Life, and in whoſe favour is Life) is perfect Bleſſedneſs.

But we muſt ſtand a little here and conſider our Miſery, that have fallen from ſuch an Excellency: How are we come down from Heaven wonderfully? Sin has interpoſed between God and Man, and this diſſolves the Union, and hinders the Communion: An Enemy is come between two Friends, and puts them at Odds, and Oh! an eternal Odds; Sin hath ſown this Diſcord, and alienated our Hearts from God. Man's Glory conſiſted in the Irradiation of the Soul from God's ſhining Countenance, this made him Light, God's Face ſhined on him. But Sin interpoſing, has eccliſped that Light and brought on an eternal Night of Darkneſs over the Soul: And thus we are ſpoiled of the Image of God, as when the Earth comes between the Sun and Moon. Now then, there can no Beams of divine Favour and Love break through directly towards us, becauſe of the Cloud of our Sins, that ſeparates between God and us, and becauſe of the Partition-wall of Ordinances, and the Hand-writing which was againſt us, God's holy Law, and ſevere Juſtice, *Col.* iii. 14.

Then, What ſhall we do? How ſhall we ſee his Face in Joy? Certainly it had been altogether impoſſible, if our Lord Jeſus Chriſt had not come, who is the Light and Life of Men: The Father ſhines on him, and the Beams of his Love reflects upon us, from the Son: The Love of God, and his favourable Countenance, that

that cannot meet with us in a direct and immediate Beam, they fall on us in this bleſſed Compaſs, by the Intervention of a Mediator.

We are Rebels, ſtanding at Diſtance with God, Chriſt comes between a Mediator, and Peace-maker to reconcile us to God: *God is in Chriſt reconciling the World.* God firſt makes an Union of Natures with Chriſt, and ſo he comes near to us, down to us, who could not come up to him; and then he ſends out the Word of Reconciliation, the Goſpel, the Tenor whereof is this, 1 *John* i. 3. *That which we have ſeen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have Fellowſhip with the Father and his Son.* It is a Voice of Peace, and Invitation to the Fellowſhip of God: Behold then, the Happineſs of Man is the very End and Purpoſe of the Goſpel. Chriſt is the Repairer of the Breaches, the ſecond *Adam* aſpired to quicken what *Adam* killed; He has ſlain the Enmity, and cancelled the Hand-writing that was againſt us, and ſo made Peace by the Blood of his Croſs; and then having removed all that out of the Way, he comes and calls us unto the Fellowſhip which we were ordained unto from our Creation. We who are Rebels, are called to be Friends; *I call you not Servants but Friends.* It is a Wonder that the Creature ſhould be called a Friend of God; but, O great Wonder, that the Rebel ſhould be called a Friend: And yet that is not all, we are called to a nearer Union, to be the Sons of God; this is our Privilege, *John* i. 12. This is a great Part of our Fellowſhip with the Father, and his Son; we are the Father's Children, and the Son's Brethren, and if Children then Heirs, and Heirs of God, and if Brethren, then Co-heirs with Chriſt, *Rom.* viii. 17.

Thus the Union is begun again in Chriſt, but as long as Sin dwells in our mortal Bodies, it is not peefect, there is always ſome Separation, and ſome Enmity in our Hearts, and ſo there is neither full ſeeing of God (for we know but in Part, and we ſee darkly,) nor full enjoying of God; for we are ſaved by Hope, and we live by Faith, and not by Sight. But this is begun which is the Seed of eternal Communion, we are here Partakers of the divine Nature. Now then it muſt aſpire unto a more perfect Union with God whoſe Image it is: And therefore the Soul of a Believer is here ſtill in Motion towards God as his Element. There is here an Union in Affection, but not compleated in Fruition, *affectu non effectu*, the Soul pants after God? *Whom have I in Heaven or Earth but thee?* My Fleſh and my Heart faileth. A believing Soul looks upon God as its only Portion, accounts nothing Miſery but to be ſeparated from him, and nothing Bleſſedneſs, but to be one with him: This is the Load-ſtone of their Affections and Deſires, the Centre which they move towards; and in which they will reſt. It is true indeed, that often-times our Heart and our Fleſh faileth us, and we become Ignorant and Brutiſh: Our Affections cleave to the Earth, and Temptations with their Violence turn our Souls towards another End than God; as there is nothing more eaſily moved and turned Wrong than the Needle that is touched with the Adamant, yet it ſettles not in ſuch a Poſture, it recovers itſelf and reſts never till it look towards the North, and then it is fixed: Even ſo Temptations and the Corruptions and Infirmities of our Hearts, diſturb our Spirits eaſily, and wind them about from the Lord, towards any other Thing: But yet we are continuing with him, and he keeps us with his Right Hand; and therefore though we may be moved, yet we ſhall not be greatly commoved, we may fall, but we ſhall

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rise again: He is the Strength of our Heart, and therefore he will turn our Heart about again, and fix it upon its own Portion: Our Union here consists more in his holding of us by his Power, than our taking hold of him by Faith: Power and Good-will encamps about both Faith and the Soul, we are kept by his Power through Faith, 1 *Pet.* i. And thus he will *guide the Soul*, and still be drawing it nearer to him, from it self, and from Sin, and from the World, till he *receive us into Glory, and until we be one as with the Father and the Son, He in us and we in him, that we may be made perfect in one*, as it is in the Words read.

This is strange, a greater Unity and fuller Enjoyment, a more perfect Fellowship, than ever *Adam* in his Innocency would have been capable of; what Soul can conceive it? What Tongue expres it? None can: For it's that which *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor entred into Mans Heart to conceive*. We must suspend the Knowledge of it, till we have Experience of it. Let us now believe it, and then we shall find it. There is a mutual Inhabitation which is wonderful: Persons that *dwell* one with another have much Society and Fellowship, but to dwell *one in another* is a strange thing, *I in them, and they in me*; and therefore God is often said to dwell in us, and we to dwell in him. But that which makes it of all most wonderful, and incomprehensible, is, that glorious Unity and Communion between the Father and the Son, which it is made an Emblem of: *As thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* Can you conceive that Unity of the Trinity? Can you imagine that reciprocal Inhabitation, that mutual Communion between the Father and the Son? No: It hath not entred into the Heart to conceive it. Only thus much we know, that it is most Perfect, it is most Glorious, and so much we may apprehend of this Unity of the Saints with God. O, Love is an uniting and transforming Thing, God *is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* He dwelleth in us by Love, this makes him work in us, and shine upon us; Love hath drawn him down from his Seat of Majesty, to visit poor Cottages of Sinners, *Isa.* lxvi. 1, 2. and xlvii. 15. And it is that Love of God, reflecting upon our Souls, that carries the Soul upward to him, to live in him, and walk with him. O how doth it constrain a Soul to live to him, and draw it from it self, 2 *Cor.* v. 15. Then the more Unity with God, the more Separation from our selves, and the World; the nearer God the farther from our selves, and the farther from our selves the more happy; And the more Unity with God, the more Unity among our selves, among the Brethren of our Family: Because here we are not fully one with our Father, therefore there are many Differences between us and Brethren; because we are not one perfectly in him, therefore we are not one as he and the Father is one. But when he shall be in us, and we in him, as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, then shall we be one among our selves, then shall we meet in the Unity of the Faith, into a perfect Man, *into the Measure of the Stature of the fulness of Christ*, Eph. iv. 13. Christ is the uniting Principle: While the Saints are not wholly one, *uni tertio*, they cannot be perfectly one *inter se*, among themselves. Consider this, I beseech you: Christ's Union with the Father, is the Foundation of our Union to God, and our Union among our selves; this is comfortable, the Ground of it is

laid already. Now it is not ſimply the Unity of the Father and the Son in Eſſence that is here meant, for what Shadow and Reſemblance can be in the World, of ſuch an incomprehenſible Myſtery? But it is certainly the Union and Communion of God with Chriſt Jeſus as Mediator, as the Head of the Church, which is his Body: Therefore ſeeing the Father is ſo wonderfully well pleaſed and one with Chriſt, his Well-beloved Son and Meſſenger of the Covenant, and chief Party contracting in our Name, He is by Vertue of this, one with us, who are his Seed and Members. And therefore, the Members ſhould grow up in the Head Chriſt, from whom the whole Body makes increaſe according to the effectual working of the Spirit in it, *Eph.* v. 15, 16. Now if the Union between the Father and Chriſt our Head cannot be diſſolved, and cannot be Barren and Unfruitful, then certainly the Spirit of the Father, which is given to Chriſt beyond Meaſure, muſt effectually work in every Member, till it bring them to the Unity of the Faith, and to the Meaſure of the perfect Man which is the Fulneſs of Chriſt. So then every believing Soul is one with the Father as Chriſt is one, becauſe he is the Head and they the Members, and the Day is coming that all the Members ſhall be perfectly united to the Head Chriſt, and grow up to the perfect Man, which is the Stature of Chriſt's Fulneſs, *and then ſhall we all be made perfect in one: We ſhall be one as He is one*; becauſe he and we are one perfect Man, Head and Members.

Now to what Purpoſe is all this ſpoken? I fear, it doth not ſtir up in our Souls a Deſire after ſuch a bleſſed Life, Whoſe Heart would not be moved at the Sound of ſuch Words? Our Fellowſhip is with the Father and his Son, we are made perfect, he in us, and we in him: Certainly, that Soul is void of the Life of God, that doth not find ſome Sparkle of holy Ambition kindled within, after ſuch a glorious and bleſſed Condition. But theſe Things ſavour not, and taſte not to the moſt Part; the natural Man knows them not, for they are Spiritually diſcerned: How lamentable is it, that Chriſt is come to reſtore us to our loſt Bleſſedneſs, and yet no Man almoſt conſiders it or lays it to Heart: O how miſerable, twice miſerable is that Soul, that doth not draw near to God in Chriſt, when God hath come ſo near to us in Chriſt? That goes a whoring after the Luſt of Eyes, and Fleſh, and after the Imaginations of their own Heart; and will not be guided by Chriſt the Way and Life to Glory? *Thou ſhalt deſtroy them O Lord*, Pſal. lxxiii. 27. All Men are far off from God, from the Womb: Behold we may have Acceſs to God in Chriſt: Woe to them that are yet far off, and will not draw near, *they ſhall all periſh*. I exhort you to conſider what ye are doing; The moſt Part of you are going away from God; you were born far off, and you will yet go further; know what you will meet with in that Way, Deſtruction.

You have never yet asked in earneſt, For what Purpoſe you came in the World? What wonder, ye wander and walk at random, ſeeing ye have not propoſed to your ſelves any certain Scope and Aim? It is great Folly; you would not be ſo fooliſh in any petty Buſineſs: But O how fooliſh Men are in the main Buſineſs! *The Light of the Body is the Eye, if that be not Light, the whole Body is full of Darkneſs.* If your Intention be once right eſtabliſhed, all your Courſe will be orderly; but if you be dark and blind in this Point,

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and have not considered it, you cannot walk in the Light, your whole Way is Darkness. The right Consideration of the great *End*, would shine unto you, and direct your Way: But, while you have not proposed this End unto your selves, the Enjoyment of God, you must spend your Time, either in doing nothing to that Purpose, or doing contrary to it. All your other lawful Business, your Callings and Occupations, are but in the by, they are not the End, nor the Way, but you make them only your Business, they are altogether impertinent to this End. And the rest of your walking in Lusts and Ignorance, is not only impertinent, but inconsistent with it, and contrary to it. If you think that you have this before your Eyes, to enjoy God; I pray you look upon the Way you chose: Is your Drunkenness, your Swearing, your Uncleanness, your Contentions and Railings, and such Works of the Flesh; are those the Way to enjoy God? Shall not these separate between God and you? Is your Eating, and Drinking, sleeping as Beasts, and labouring in your Callings; are these all the Means you use to enjoy God? Be not deceived, you who draw not near God by Prayer often in secret, and by Faith in his Son Christ, as lost miserable Sinners, to be saved, and reconciled by him, you have no Fellowship with him, and you shall not enjoy him afterward. You whose Hearts are given to your Covetousness, who have many Lovers and Idols besides him, you cannot say, Whom have I besides Thee in the Earth? No, you have many other things besides God. You can have nothing of God, except ye make him all to you, unless you have him alone. *My undefiled is One*, Cant. vi. 9. he must be alone, for his Glory he will not give to another: If you divide your Affections, and pretend to give him Part, and your Lusts other Part, you may be doing, but he will not divide his Glory so, he will give no Part of it to any other thing. But as for those Souls, that come to him and see their Misery without him, O know how Good it is! It's not only *Good*, but *best*, yea *only Good*, it is *bonum*, and it is *optimum*, yea, it is *unicum*; there is none Good, save One, even God, and there is nothing Good for us but this One, to be near God, and so near, that we may be one, one Spirit with the Lord, for he that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit: Rejoice in your Portion, and long for the Possession of it. Let all your Meditations and Affections, and Conversation, proclaim this, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and none in the Earth beside Thee*. And certainly he shall guide you to the End, and receive you into Glory; then you shall rest from your Labours, because you shall dwell in him, and enjoy that which you longed and laboured for. Let the Consideration of our End unite the Hearts of Christians here. O what an absurd Thing is it, that those who shall lodge together at Night, and be made perfect in one, should not only go contrary-ways, but have contrary Minds and Affections.

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Of the SCRIPTURES.

2 Tim. iii. 16. *All Scripture is given*, &c.

WE told you, that there was nothing more neceſſary to know, than what our End is, and what the Way is that leads to that End: We ſee the moſt Part of Men walking at Random, running an uncertain Race, becauſe they do not propoſe unto themſelves a certain Scope to aim at, and whither to direct their whole Courſe. According to Mens particular Inclinations and Humours, ſo do the Purpoſes and Deſigns of Men vary; and often do the Purpoſes of one Man change, according to the Circumſtances of Time, and his Condition in the World. We ſee all Men almoſt running croſs one to another; one drives at the Satisfaction of his Luſt by Pleaſure, another fancies a great Felicity in Honour, a third in getting Riches, and thus Men divide themſelves; whereas, if it were true Happineſs that all were all ſeeking, they would all go one Way towards one End. If Men be not in the right Way, the faſter they ſeem to move toward the Mark, the further they go from it: Wandring from the right Way, (ſuppoſe Men intend well) will put them further from that which they intend. *Si via in contrarium ducat, ipſa velocitas majoris intervalli cauſa eſt*: Therefore it concerns us all moſt deeply, to be acquainted with the true Path of Bleſſedneſs; for if we once miſtake, the more we do, the ſwifter we move; the more diſtant we are from it indeed. And there is the more Need, becauſe there are ſo many by-paths that lead to Deſtruction: What ſay I, by-paths? No, High-ways, beaten Paths, that the Multitude of Men walk in, and never challenge, nor will endure to be challenged, as if they were in an Error. In other Journeys, Men keep the plain High-way, and are afraid of any ſecret By-way; leſt it lead them wrong: *At hic, via quæque tritiſſima maxime decipit.* Here the high pathed Way leads Wrong, and, O far Wrong! to Hell. This is the Meaning of Chriſt's Sermon, *Enter in at the ſtrait Gate*, but walk not in the broad Way where many walk, for it leads to Deſtruction: Therefore I would have this Perſwaſion once begotten in your Souls, that the Courſe of this World; the Way of the moſt Part of Men is dangerous, is damnable. O conſider, whither the Way will lead you, before you go further. Do not think it a Folly to ſtand ſtill now, and examine it, when ye have gone on ſo long in their Company. Stand, I ſay, and conſider: Be not ignorant as Beaſts, that know no other Thing than to follow the Drove, *quæ pergunt, non quæ eundum eſt, ſed quæ itur*; they follow not whither they ought to go, but whither moſt go: You are Men, and have reaſonable Souls within you; therefore I beſeech you be not compoſed, and faſhioned according to Cuſtom, and Example, that is brutiſh, but according to ſome inward Knowledge and Reaſon. Retire once from the Multitude, and ask in earneſt at God, what is the Way? Him that fears him, he will teach the Way that he ſhould chooſe: The Way to his bleſſed End is very ſtrait, very dif-

difficult; you muſt have a Guide in it, you muſt have a Lamp and a Light in it, elſe you cannot but go wrong.

The principles of Reaſon within us are too dark and dim, they will never lead us through the Pits and Snares in the Way: Theſe indeed ſhined brightly in *Adam*, that he needed no Light without him, no Voice about him; but Sin hath extinguiſhed it much, and there remains nothing but ſome little Spunk, or Sparkle, under the Aſhes of much Corruption, that is but inſufficient in it ſelf, and is often more blinded and darkned by Luſts. So that if it were never ſo much refined, as it was in many Heathens, yet it is but the blind leading the blind, and both muſt fall into the Ditch. Our End is high and Divine, *To glorifie God and to enjoy Him*, therefore our Reaſon *caligat ad ſuprema*; it can no more ſtedfaſtly behold that glorious End, and move towards it, than our weak Eyes can behold the Sun: Our Eyes can look downward upon the Earth, but not upward to the Heavens. So we have ſome Remnant of Reaſon in us that hath ſome petty and poor Ability for Matters of little Moment, as the Things of this Life: But if once we look upward to the Glory of God, or eternal Happineſs, our Eyes are dazled, our Reaſon confounded, we cannot ſtedfaſtly behold that, *Eph.* iv. 18. 2 *Cor.* iii. 13, 14.

Therefore the Lord hath been pleaſed to give us the Scriptures, which may be a *Lamp unto our Feet*, and *a Guide unto our Way, whereunto we ſhall do well to take heed, as unto a Candle or a Light that ſhines in a dark Place, till the Day dawn*, 2 Pet. i. 6. Theſe are *able to make us wiſe unto Salvation.* Let us hear what *Paul* ſpeaks to *Timothy*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. *All Scripture is given*, &c. Where you have two Points of high Concernment, The Authority of the Scriptures, and their Utility. Their Authority, for they are given by Divine Inſpiration: Their Utility, for they are profitable for Doctrine, *&c.* and can *make us perfect*, and well furniſhed to every good Work.

The Authority of it is in a peculiar Way divine, *of Him, and through Him are all Things*: All Writings of Men, according to the Truth of the Scriptures, have ſome Divinity in them, in as much as they have of Truth, which is a divine Thing: Yet the Holy Scriptures are by way of Excellency attributed to God, for they are immediately inſpired of God: Therefore *Peter* ſaith, that *the Scriptures came not in old Time by the will of Man, but holy Men ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, 2 Pet. i. 21. God by his Spirit, as it were, acted the Part of the Soul, in the Prophets and Apoſtles; and they did no more but utter what the Spirit conceived: The Holy Ghoſt inſpired the Matter and the Words, and they were but Tongues and Pens to ſpeak and write it unto the People; there needed no Debate, no Search in their own Minds, for the Truth, no Inquiſition for Light, but Light ſhined upon their Souls ſo brightly, ſo convincingly, that it puts it beyond all Queſtion, that it was the Mind and Voice of God. You need not ask, How they did know that their Dreams or Viſions were indeed from the Lord? And that they did not frame any Imagination in their own Hearts, and taught it for his Word, as many did? I ſay, you need no more ask that, than ask, How ſhall a Man ſee Light, or know the Sun-ſhine? Light makes itſelf manifeſt, and all other Things; it's ſeen by its own Brightneſs: Even ſo the holy Men of God, needed not any Mark or Sign to know the Spirit's Voice, his Revelation needed not

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the Light of any other Thing, it was Light it ſelf, it would certainly over-power the Soul and Mind, and leave no Place of Doubting. God who cannot be deceived, and can deceive no Man, hath delivered us this Doctrine. O, with what Reverence ſhall we receive it, as if we heard the Lord from Heaven ſpeak. If you ask, How you ſhall be perſwaded that the Scriptures are the Word of God, his very Mind opened to Men and made legible? Truly, there are ſome Things cannot be well proved, not becauſe they are doubtfull, but becauſe they are clear of themſelves, and beyond all Doubt and Exception. Principles of Arts muſt not be proved, but ſuppoſed, till you find by Trial and Experience afterward that they were indeed really true. There are no Queſtion, ſuch Characters of Divinity, and Majeſty, imprinted in the very Scriptures themſelves, that whoſoever hath the Eyes of his Underſtanding opened, though he run he may read them, and find God in them. What Majeſty is in the very Simplicity and Plainneſs of the Scriptures? They do not labour to pleaſe Mens Ears, and adorn the Matter, with the curious Garments of Words, and Phraſes; but repreſent the very Matter it ſelf to the Soul, as that which in itſelf is worthy of all Acceptation, and needs no humane Eloquence to commend it. Painting doth ſpoil native Beauty, external Ornaments would disfigure ſome things, that are of themſelves proportioned and lovely, therefore the Lord chooſes a plain and ſimple Stile, which is Fooliſhneſs to the World; but in theſe ſwaddling Cloaths of the Scriptures, and this poor Cottage, the Child Jeſus, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, is contained. There is a Jewel of the myſterious Wiſdom of God, and Man's eternal Bleſſedneſs in this Mineral: What glorious and aſtoniſhing Humility is here? What humble and homely Glory and Majeſty alſo? He is moſt high, and yet none ſo lowly. What excellent Conſent and Harmony of many Writers in ſuch diſtant Times? Wonder at it! All ſpeak one Thing, to one Purpoſe, to bring Men to God, to abaſe all Glory, and exalt him alone. Muſt it not be one Spirit that hath quickned all theſe, and breathes in them all this one heavenly Song, of *Glory to God on High, and Good-will towards Men.* Other Writers will reaſon theſe Things with you to convince you, and perſwade you, and many think them more profound and deep for that Reaſon, and do deſpiſe the Baſeneſs of the Scriptures: But to them whoſe Eyes are opened, the Majeſty and Authority of God commanding and aſſerting, and teſtifying to them, is more convincing, from its own bare Aſſertion, than all Humane Reaſon.

Although there be much Light in the Scriptures to guide Men's Way to God's Glory and their own Happineſs, yet certainly it will all be to ſmall Purpoſe if the Eyes of our Underſtanding be darkned and blinded. If you ſhall ſurround a Man with Day-light, except he open his Eyes he cannot ſee. The Scriptures are a clear Sun of Life, and Righteouſneſs; but the blind Soul compaſſed with that Light is nothing the wiſer, but thinks the Lamp of the Word ſhines not, becauſe it ſees not, it hath its own Dungeon within it; therefore the Spirit of God muſt open the Eyes of the Blind, and enlighten the Eyes of the Underſtanding, that a Soul may ſee wonderful Things in God's Law, *Pſal.* cxix. 5, 8. *John* 1. 5. The Light may ſhine in the Darkneſs, but the Darkneſs cannot comprehend it. I wonder not that the moſt Part of Men can ſee no Beauty, no Majeſty, no Excellency in the holy Scriptures to allure them, becauſe they are natural

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and have not the Spirit of God, and so cannot know these Things, for they are spiritually discerned, 2 *Cor.* ii. 14, *&c.* Therefore as the Inspiration of God did conceive this Writing at first, and preached this Doctrine unto the World; so there can no Soul understand it, or profit by it, but by the Inspiration of the Almighty *Verily there is a Spirit in Man, and the Inspiration of the Almighty gives him Understanding*, saith *Job*. When the Spirit comes into the Soul to engrave the Characters of that Law and Truth into the Heart, which were once engraven on Tables of Stone, and not written with Pen and Ink, then the Spirit of Christ Jesus writes over and transcribes the Doctrine of the Gospel, on fleshly Tables of the Heart, draws the Lineaments of that Faith, and Love, preached in the Word upon the Soul; then the Soul is the Epistle of Christ, written not with Ink and Pen but with the Spirit of the living God, 2 *Cor.* iii. 3. And then the Soul is manifestly declared to be such, when that which is impressed on the Heart, is expressed in the outward Man in walking, that it may be read of all Men. Now the Soul having thus received the Image of the Scriptures on it, understands the Spirit's Voice in them, and sees the Truth and Divinity of them. The Eye must receive some Species and Likeness of the Object before it see it, it must be made like to the Object ere it can behold it: *Intelligens in actu fit ipsum intelligibile*: So the Soul must have some Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, before it can believe with the Heart the inspired Scriptures.

Now for the Utility and Profit of the Scriptures, who can speak of it, according to its Worth? Some Things may be overcommended, nay, all Things, but this One, God speaking in his Word to Mankind. Many Titles are given to humane Writings, some are called accurate, some subtile, some ingenious and quick, some profound and deep, some plain, some learned: But call them what they please, the Scriptures may vindicate to itself these two Titles as its own Prerogative, *Holy* and *profitable*. The best Speaker in the World in many Words cannot want Sin, the best Writer hath some Dross and Refuse; but here, all is holy, all is profitable: Many Books are to no Purpose, but to feed and inflame Mens Lusts, many serve for nothing but to spend and drive over the Time, without Thought; most Part are good for nothing, but to burden and overweary the World, to put them in a Fancy of Knowledge which they have not; many serve for this only to nourish Mens Curiosity and vain Imaginations, and Contentions, about Words and Notions; but here is a Book *profitable*, *all profitable*. If you do not yet profit by it, you can have no Pleasure in it, 'tis only ordained for Soul's profiting, not for pleasing your Fancy, not for matter of curious Speculation, not for Contention, and Strife, about the Interpretation of it. Many Books have nothing in them, but specious Titles to commend them; they do nothing less than what they promise, they have a large and fair Entry which leads only into a poor Cottage; but the Scriptures have no hyperbolick and superlative Styles to allure Men, they hold out a plain and common Gate and Entry which will undoubtedly lead to a pleasant Palace; others *& prodesse volunt & delectare*, but these certainly, *& prodesse volunt & possunt*, they both can profit you and will profit you. I wish that Souls would read the Scriptures as profitable Scriptures, with Intention to profit. If you do not read with such a purpose, you read not the Scriptures of God, they become as another

Book unto you. But what are they profitable for? *For Doctrine*, and a Divine Doctrine. A Doctrine of Life and Happineſs: 'Tis the great Promiſe of the New Covenant, *You ſhall be all taught of God*, the Scriptures can make a Man learned and wiſe, learned to Salvation. It is Fooliſhneſs to the World, *but the World through Wiſdom know not God.* Alas! what do they then know? Is there any beſides God? And is there any Knowledge beſides the Knowledge of God? You have a poor petty Wiſdom among you, to gather Riches and manage your Buſineſs: Others have a poor imaginary Wiſdom that they call Learning; and generally People think, to pray to God is but a Paper-skill, a little Book-craft; they think the Knowledge of God is nothing elſe but to learn to read the Bible. Alas! miſtake not, it is another thing to know God: The Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt written on the Heart, is a deep profound Learning, and the poor, ſimple, and rudeſt People may by the Spirit's teaching become wiſer than their Ancients, than their Miniſters: O! 'tis an excellent point of Learning, to know how to be ſaved. What is it, I pray you, to know the Courſe of the Heavens? to number the Orbs, and the Stars in them? to meaſure their Circumference, to reckon their Motions, and yet not to know Him that ſits on the Circle of them, and not know how to inhabite and dwell there? If you would ſeek unto God, and ſeek Eyes opened to behold the Myſtery of the Word, you would become wiſer than your Paſtors, you would learn from the Spirit to pray better, you would find the way to Heaven better than they can teach you, or walk in it.

Then it is *profitable for Reproof and Correction*: It contains no Doctrine very pleaſant to Mens natural Humours; but it is, indeed, moſt pleaſant, to a right and ordered taſte. You know, the Diſtemper of the Eye, or the perverting of the Taſte, will miſ-repreſent pleaſant Things, and ſweet Things to the Senſes, and make them appear ill ſavoured and bitter: But I ſay to a diſcerning Spirit, there is nothing ſo ſweet, ſo comely. *I have ſeen an End of all Perfection*, but none of thy Law! *Thy Word is ſweeter to me than the Honey, or the Honey-comb.* If a Soul be pre-poſſeſſed with the Love of the World, and the Luſts of the World, it cannot ſavour and taſte to them; that vitious Quality, in the Mind, will make the pleaſant Goſpel unpleaſant: *I piped unto you, and you have not danced.* But however, the Scriptures are then moſt profitable, when they are leaſt pleaſant to our Corruptions; and therefore, it is an abſolute and intire Piece, *Et prodeſſe volunt & delectare. Omne tulit punctum, qui miſcuit utile dulci.* There are ſharp Reproofs, and ſad Corrections of his holy Law, which muſt make way for the pleaſant and ſweet Goſpel: There is a Reproof of Life, a wounding before healing, that *whoſo refuſe them, diſpiſe their own Soul, but the Ear that heareth them abideth among the wiſe*, Prov. xv. 31. Wo unto that Soul that Correction, or Reproof, or Threatning is grievous unto, *He ſhall die*, ver. 10. *He is brutiſh*, Pro. xii. 1. There is a Generation of Men, that can endure to hear nothing but Goſpel-promiſes, that cry out againſt all reproving of Sins, and preaching of God's Wrath againſt unbelieving Sinners, as legal, and medling with other Mens Matters, eſpecially if they reprove the Sins of Rulers, their publick State-enormities: As if the whole Word of God were not profitable; as if Reproofs were not as wholſome as Conſolations; as if Threatnings did not contribute to make

make Men flee from the Wrath to come into a City of Refuge. Let such Persons read their own Character out of wise *Solomon, Correction is grievous to them that forsake the Way. Reprove a wise Man, and he will love thee, and he will be yet wiser,* Pro. ix. 9. If we were Pleasers of Men, then were we not the Servants of Jesus Christ; let us strive to profit Men, but not to please them: Peace, Peace, which Mens own Hearts fancy, would please them, but it were better for them to be awakened out of that Dream, by Reproof, by Correction; and he that will do so, shall *find more Favour of him afterward, than he that flattereth him with his Tongue,* Pro. xxviii. 23. Well then, let this be established in your Hearts as the Foundation of all true Religion, That the Scriptures are the Word of the eternal God, and that they contain a perfect and exact Rule both of glorifying God, and of the way to enjoy Him; they can make you perfect to every good Work. I shall say no more on this, but beseech you, as you love your own Souls, be acquainting your selves with them. You will hear, in these Days, of Men pretending to more divine and spiritual Discoveries, and Revelations, than the Scriptures contain: But, my Brethren, these can make you wise to Salvation, these can make you perfect to every good Work: Then, what needs more? All that is beside Salvation, and beyond Perfection, count it superfluous and vain, if not worse, if not diabolical. Let others be wise to their own Destruction; let them establish their own Imaginations for the Word of God, and Rule of their Faith, but hold you fast what you have received, and contend earnestly for it; add nothing, and diminish nothing; let this Lamp shine till the Day dawn, till the Morning of the Resurrection, and walk ye in the Light of it, and do not kindle any other Sparkles, else ye shall ly down in the Grave in Sorrow, and rise in Sorrow: Take the Word of God as the only Rule, and the perfect Rule, a Rule for all your Actions, Civil, Natural, and Religious, for all must be done to his Glory, and his Word teacheth how to attain to that End. Let not your Imaginations, let not others Example, let not the Preaching of Men, let not the Conclusions and Acts of Assemblies, be your Rule, but in as far as you find them agreeing with the perfect Rule of God's holy Word: All other Rules are *regulæ regulatæ*; they are but like Publications and Intimations of the Rule it self. Ordinances of Assemblies are but like the Herald-promulgation of the King's Statute and law; if it vary in any thing from his Intention, 'tis not valid and binding. I beseech you, take the Scriptures for the Rule of your walking, or else you will wander; the Scripture is *Regula regulans*, a ruling Rule. If you be not acquainted with it, you must follow the Opinions, or Examples of other Men, and what if they lead you unto Destruction?

Joh. v. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for in them,* &c. Eph. ii. 20. *And are built upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles.*

AS in Darkness, there is need of a Lanthorn without, and the Light of the Eyes within; for neither can we see in Darkness without some Lamp, though we have never so good Eyes, nor yet see without Eyes, though in never so clear a Sun-shine: So there is absolute Need, for the guiding of our Feet in the dangerous

gerous, and dark Paths to eternal Life, (that is full of Pits and Snares) of the Lamp, or Word, written, or preached, without us; and the Illmination of the Holy Ghoſt within us. Theſe are conjoyned, *Iſa.* lix. 21. *This is my Covenant, the Spirit that is upon thee, and the Words that I have put in thy Mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth, nor the Mouth of thy Seed*, &c. There are Words without, and there muſt needs be a Spirit within, which makes us to behold the Truth and Grace contained in theſe Words. There is a Law written without, with Pen and Ink, and there is a Law written within, upon the Heart, with the Spirit of the living God: The Law without is the Pattern and exact Copy; the Law within, is the Tranſcript, or the Image of God upon the Heart, framed and faſhioned according to the Similitude of it, 2 *Cor.* iii. 3. *Heb.* viii. 10. So then, there needs be no more Queſtion about the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, among thoſe who have their Senſe exerciſed to diſcern between good and ill, than among Men who ſee, and taſte, concerning Light and Darkneſs, ſweet and bitter. The Perſwaſion of a Chriſtian is fetched deeper than the Reaſons of Men; their Faith is the Evidence of Things not ſeen, 'tis an Eye, a ſupernatural Eye, whereby a Soul beholds that Majeſty and Excellency of God ſhining in the Word, which though it ſhine about the reſt of the World, yet 'tis not ſeen, becauſe they cannot know it, nor diſcern it. Wonder not, that the Multitude of Men cannot believe the Report that is made, that there are ſo few, who find any ſuch Excellency and Sweetneſs in the Goſpel as is reported, becauſe, ſaith *Iſaiah*, liii. 1. The Arm of the Lord is not revealed to them; the Hand of God muſt firſt write on their Heart, ere they underſtand the Writings of the Scriptures; his Arm muſt create an Eye in their Souls, an eternal Light, before it can behold that glorious Brightneſs of God ſhining in the Word. The Word is God's Teſtimony of himſelf, of his Grace and Mercy and good Will to Mankind: Now no Man can receive this Teſtimony, unleſs it be ſealed and confirmed by the Holy Ghoſt into the Heart: Saith *Peter, We are his Witneſſes of theſe things, and ſo alſo is the Holy Ghoſt whom God hath given to thoſe that obey him*, Acts. v. 32. The Word witneſſes to the Ear, and the Spirit teſtifieth to our Spirits the Truth and Worth of that, and therefore the Spirit is a Seal and a Witneſs. The Word is the Lord's Voice to his own Children, Baſtards cannot know it, *but my Sheep hear my Voice*, John x. 4, 16. You know no Difference between the bleating of one Sheep and another, but the poor Lambs know their Mother's voice, there is a ſecret Inſtinct of Nature, that is more powerful than many Marks and Signs: Even ſo thoſe who are begotten of God know his Voice, they diſcern that in it, which all the World that hear it cannot diſcern, there is a Sympathy between their Souls and that living Word, that Word is the immortal Seed they are begotten of, and there is a natural Inſtinct to love that, and to meditate in it; ſuch an Inclination to it as in new born Babes to the Breaſts: So the Children of *God do deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby*, as they were born of it, 1 *Pet.* ii. 2. In theſe Scriptures which we read in your Audience, you have ſomething of their Excellency, and our Duty; there is a rich Jewel in them, a precious Pearl in that Field, even Jeſus Chriſt, and in him eternal Life; and therefore we ought to ſearch the Scriptures for this

this Jewel, to dig in the Field for this Pearl, the Doctrine of the Prophets and Apoſtles, as a ſure Foundation whereupon Souls may build their eternal Felicity, and the Hope of it. Jeſus Chriſt is the very chief Stone in that Foundation, whereupon the Weight of all the Saints and all their Hope hangs. And therefore we ought to lean the Weight of our Souls only to this Truth of God, and build our Faith only upon it, and ſquare our Practice only by it.

We ſhall ſpeak ſomething of the Firſt, that it may be a Spur to the Second. The *Jews* had ſome reſpective Opinion of the Word of God, they knew that in them was eternal Life, they thought it a Doctrine of Life and Happineſs, and ſo cried up *Moſes* Writings, but they would not believe Chriſt's Words, they erred, not underſtanding the Scriptures, and ſo ſet the Writings of *Moſes* Law at Variance, with the Preaching of Chriſt's Goſpel: What a pitiful Miſtake was this? They thought they had eternal Life in the Scriptures, and yet they did not receive nor acknowledge him whom to know was eternal Life; therefore our Lord Jeſus ſends them back again to the Scriptures, go and ſearch them, you think, and you think well, that in them you may find the Way to eternal Life, but while you ſeek it in them you miſtake it: Theſe Scriptures teſtifie of me the End of the Law, but you cannot behold the End of that Miniſtry, becauſe of the Blindneſs of your Hearts, *Rom.* x. 3. 2 *Cor.* iii. 13, 14. Therefore ſearch again, unfold the Ceremonies, I am wrapt in them, and Life eternal with me, dig up the Law till you find the Bottom of God's Purpoſe in it, till you find the End of the Miniſtration, and you ſhall find me, the Way, and Truth, and Life, and ſo you ſhall have that eternal Life which now you do but think you have, and are beguiled. While you ſeek it out of me, in vain you think you have it, for it is not in the Scriptures, but becauſe they teſtify of me the Life and the Light of Men. May not this now commend the Word to us? Eternal Life is in it. Other Writings and Diſcourſes may tickle the Ears, with ſome pleaſing Eloquence, but that is vaniſhing, 'tis but like a Muſician's Voice; ſome may repreſent ſome petty and momentary Advantage, but how ſoon ſhall an End be put to all that? So that within a litttle Time the Advantage of all the Books of the World ſhall be gone. The Statutes and Laws of Kings and Parliaments can reach no further than ſome temporal Reward or Puniſhment, their higheſt Pain is the killing of this Body, their higheſt Reward is ſome evaniſhing and fading Honour, or periſhing Riches: But he ſheweth his Word and Judgments to us, and hath not dealt ſo with every Nation, *Pſal.* clxvii. 19, 20. And no Nation under the whole Heaven hath ſuch Laws and Ordinances; eternal Life and eternal Death is wrapt up in them, theſe are Rewards and Puniſhments ſuitable to the Majeſty and Magnificence of the eternal Law-giver. Conſider, I beſeech you, what is folded up here, the Scriptures ſhew the Path of Life, Life is of all Things moſt excellent, and comes neareſt the bleſſed Being of God. When we ſay (Life) we underſtand a bleſſed Life, that only deſerves the Name. Now this we have loſt in *Adam*, Death is paſt upon all Men, but that Death is not the worſt, 'tis but a Conſequence of a Soul-death, the immortal Soul, whoſe Life conſiſteth in Communion with God, and Peace with him, is ſeparated from him by Sin, and ſo killed, when it is cut off from the Fountain of Life; what Life can it have any more, than a Beam that is cut off by the

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Intervention of a dark Body from the Sun. Now then what a blessed Doctrine must it be that brings to Life, Light and Immortality? especially when we have so miserably lost it, and involved our Souls into an eternal Death? Life is precious in itself, but much more precious to one condemned to die, to be caught out of the Paws of the Lyon, to be brought back from the Gibbet: O how will that commend the favour of a little more Time in the World. But then if we knew what an eternal Misery we are involved into, and stand under a sentence binding us over to such an inconceivable and insupportable Punishment as is the Curse and Wrath of God, O how precious an Esteem would Souls have of the Scriptures, how would they be sweet unto their Soul, because they shew unto us a Way of escaping that Pit of Misery, and a Way of attaining eternal Blessedness, as satisfying and glorious, as the Misery would have been vexing and tormenting. O that ye would once lay these in the Ballance together, this present Life, and Life eternal. Know ye not that your Souls are created for Eternity, that they will eternally survive all these present Things: Now how do ye imagine they shall live after this Life? Your Thoughts, and Projects, and Designs are confined within the poor narrow Bounds of your Time; when you die, in that Day your Thoughts shall perish, all your Imaginations and Purposes, and Providences shall have an End then, they reach no further than that Time, and if you should wholly perish too, it were not so much Matter: But for all your Purposes and Projects to come to an End, when you are but beginning to live, and enter Eternity, that is lamentable indeed. Therefore I say, consider what ye are doing, weigh these in a Ballance, eternal Life, and the present Life, if there were no more Difference, but the Continuance of the one, and Shortness of the other, that the World's standing is but as one Day, one Moment to Eternity, that ought to preponderate in your Souls; do we not here flee away as a Shadow upon the Mountains? Are we not as a Vapour that ascends and for a little Time appears a solid Body, and then presently vanisheth? Do we not come all into the Stage of the World, as for an Hour to act our Part and be gone; now then, what is this to endless Eternity? When you have continued as long as since the World began, you are no nearer the End of it, ought not that Estate then to be most in your Eyes, how to lay up a Foundation for the Time to come? But then compare the Misery and Vexation of this Life, with the Glory and Felicity of this eternal Life; what are our Days? But few and full of Trouble. Or, if you will take the most blessed Estate you have seen or heard of in this World, of Kings and rich Men, and help all the Defects of it by your Imaginations: Suppose unto your selves the Height and Pitch of Glory, and Abundance, and Power that is attainable on Earth, and when your Fancy hath busked up such a Felicity, compare it with eternal Life: O how will that vanish out of your Imaginations; if so be you know any thing of the Life to come, you will even think that an odious Comparison, you will think all that earthly Felicity, but light as Vanity, *every Man at his best Estate is altogether Vanity.* Eternal Life will weigh down eternally, 2 *Cor.* iv. 17, 18. O but it hath an exceeding Weight in it self; one Moment of it, one Hour's Possession and Taste of it; but then what shall the endless Endurance of it add to its Weight? Now there are many that presume they have a Right to eternal Life, as the *Jews* did,

did, you think, saith he, that you have it, you think well that you think 'tis only to be found in the Scriptures, but you vainly think that you have found it in them: And there is this Reason of it, *because you will not come to me that you may have Life*, ver. 40. If you did understand the true meaning of the Scriptures, and did not rest on the outward Lettter and Ordinances, you would receive the Testimony that the Scriptures gives of me. But now you hear not me the Father's substantial Word, *therefore you have not his Word abiding in you*, ver. 38. There was nothing more general among that People than a vain carnal Confidence and Presumption of being God's People, and having Interest in the Promise of Life eternal, as it is this Day in the Visible Church. There is a Multitude that are Christans only in the Letter, and not in the Spirit, that would never admit any Question concerning this great Matter of having eternal Life, and so by not questioning it, they come to think they have it, and by Degrees their Conjectures and Thoughts about this ariseth to the Stability of some faigned and strong Perswasion of it. In the Old Testament the Lord strikes at the Roots of their Perswasions, by discovering unto them, how vain a thing it was, and how abominable before him, to have an external Profession of being his People, and to glory in external Ordinances and Privileges, and yet to neglect altogether the purging of their Hearts and Consciences from Lusts and Idol-sins, and to make no Conscience of walking righteously towards Men: Their Profession was contradicted by their Practice, *Will ye Steal, Murder, and commit Adultery, and yet come and stand in my House*, Jer. vii. 8, 9. Doth not that say as much as if I had given you Liberty to do all these Abominations? Even so it is this Day; the most Part have no more of Christianity but a Name, they have some outward Privileges of Baptism, and hearing the Word, and, it may be, have a Form of Knowledge, and a Form of Worship; but in the mean Time they are not baptized in Heart, they are in all their Conversation even conformed to the Heathen World; they hate personal Reformation, and think it too precise and needless; Now, I say, such are many of you, and yet ye would not take well to have it questioned, whether ye shall be Partakers of eternal Life? You think you are wronged when that is called in Question. Oh, that it were beyond all Question indeed. But know assuredly, That you are but Christians in the Letter, in the Flesh, and not in the Spirit; many of you have not so much as a Form of Knowledge, have not so much as the Letter of Religion: You have heard some Names in the Preaching often repeated, as *Christ*, and *God*, and *Faith*, and *Heaven*, and *Hell*, and you know no more of these but the Name; you consider not, and meditate not on them: And those who know the Truth of the Word, yet the Word abideth not, nor dwelleth in you; you have it in your Mouth, you have it in your Mind or Understanding, but it is not received in Love, it doth not dwell in the Heart, *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly*, Col. iii. 16. You have it imprisoned in your Minds, and shut up into a Corner where it is useless, and can do no more but witness against you, and scarce that: As the *Gentiles* incarcerated and detained the Truth of God, written by Nature within them, in Unrighteousness, *Rom.* i. 18. So do many of you detain the Knowledge of his Word in Unrighteousness, it hath no Place in the Heart, gets no Liberty and Freedom to walk through the Affections, and so to order

order the Converſation of Men: And therefore the moſt Part of Men do but fancy to themſelves an Intereſt and Right to eternal Life, you think it, and do but think it; it is but a ſtrong Imagination, that hath no Strength from the Grounds of it, no Stability from any Evidence or Promiſe, but meerly from it ſelf; or it is but a light and vain Conjecture that hath no Strength in it, becauſe there is no Queſtion or Doubts admitted which may try the Strength of it: But then I ſuppoſe that a Man could attain ſome anſwerable walking, that he had not only a Form of Knowledge, but ſome Reality of Practice, ſome inward Heat of Affection and Zeal for God and Godlineſs, yet there is one thing that he wants, and if it be wanting will ſpoil all: And it is this which Chriſt reproves in the *Jews*, *You will not come to me to have Life*; the Scriptures teſtifie of me, but you receive not their Teſtimony. Suppoſe a Man had as much Equity and Juſtice towards Men, Piety towards God, and Sobriety towards himſelf, as can be found among the beſt of Men; let him be a diligent Reader of the Scriptures, let him love them, and meditate on them Day and Night, yet if he do not come out of himſelf, and leave all his own Righteouſneſs as Dung behind him, that he may be found in Jeſus Chriſt, he hath no Life, he cannot have any Right to Life Eternal. You may think this a ſtrange Aſſertion, that if a Man had the Righteouſneſs and Holineſs of an Angel, yet he could not be ſaved without denying all that, and fleeing to Chriſt as an ungodly Man: And you may think it as ſtrange a Suppoſal, that any Perſon that reads the Scriptures, and walks righteouſly, and hath a Zeal towards God, yet are ſuch as will not come to Chriſt, and will not hear him whom the Father hath ſent.

But the firſt is the very Subſtance of the Goſpel, *There is no other Name by which Men may be ſaved, but by Jeſus Chriſt*, Acts iv. 12. Life Eternal is all within him, *All the Treaſures of Grace, and Wiſdom, and Knowledge, are ſeated in him*, Col. i. 19. and ii. 3. All the Light of Life and Salvation is imbodied in this Sun of Righteouſneſs, ſince the Eclipſe of Mans Felicity in the Garden. *Adam* was a living Soul, but he loſt his own Life, and killed his Poſterity. Chriſt Jeſus the ſecond common Man in the World is a quickning Spirit, he hath not only Life in himſelf, but he gives it more abundantly: And therefore you have it ſo often repeated in *John*, who was the Diſciple moſt acquainted with Chriſt, *In him was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men*, John i. 4. *And he is the Bread of Life, that gives Life to the World*, John vi. 33, 35, *He is the Reſurrection and the Life*, xi. 25. and *The Way, the Truth, and Life*, xiv. 6. The Scriptures do not contain eternal Life, but in as far as they lead to him who is Life, and whom to know and embrace is Eternal Life: And therefore (ſaith he) *Theſe are they which teſtifie of me*. Man lived immediately in God when he was in Innocency, he had Life in himſelf from God, but then he began to live in himſelf, without Dependance on God the Fountain of Life, and this-himſelf being interpoſed between God and his Life, it evaniſhed, even as a Beam by the intervening of any groſs Body between it and the Sun. Now Man's Light and Life being thus eclipſed and cut off, the Lord is pleaſed to let all Fulneſs dwell in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and *The Fulneſs of the God-Head dwelt in him bodily*, Col. ii. 9. that ſince there was no Acceſs immediately to God for Life

Life (a flaming Fire, and Sword of Divine Juſtice compaſſing and guarding the Tree of Life, leſt Man ſhould touch it) there might be acceſs to God in a Meditator like unto us, that we might come to him, and might have life from God by the Intervention of Jeſus Chriſt.

Look then what is in the Holy Scriptures, and you ſhall find it but a Letter of Death and Miniſtration of Condemnation while it is ſeparated from Him; Chriſt is the very Life and Spirit of the Scriptures, by whoſe vertue they quicken our Souls; if you conſider the perfect Rule of Righteouſneſs in the Law, you cannot find Life there, becauſe you cannot be conformed unto it; the holieſt Man offends in every thing, and that holy Law being violated in any thing will ſend thee to Hell with a Curſe, *Curſed is he that abides not in every Thing.* If you look upon the Promiſe of Life, *Do this and live*; What comfort can you find in it, except you could find *doing* in your ſelves: And can any Man living find ſuch exact Obedience as the Law requires. There is a Miſtake among many. They conceive, that the Lord cannot but be well pleaſed with them, if they do what they can: But be not deceived, the Law of God requires perfect doing; it will not compound with thee, and come down in its Terms; not one Jot of the Rigour of it will be remitted. If you cannot do all that is commanded, all you do will not ſatisfie that promiſe; therefore thou muſt be turned over from the Promiſe of Life to the Curſe, and there thou ſhalt find thy Name written: Therefore it is abſolutely neceſſary, that Jeſus Chriſt be made under the Law, and give Obedience in all things, even to the Death of the Croſs, and ſo be made a Curſe for us, and Sin for us, even he who knew no Sin; and thus in him you find the Law fulfilled, Juſtice ſatisfied, and God pleaſed; in Him you find the Promiſe of Life indeed eſtabliſhed, in a better and ſurer Way than was firſt porpounded, you find Life by his Death, you find Life in his doing for you: And again, conſider the Ceremonial Law, What were all thoſe Sacrifices and Ceremonies? Did God delight in them? Could he ſavour their Incenſe, and ſweet Smels, and eat the Fat of Lambs, and be pacified? No, he deteſts and abhors ſuch Imaginations. Becauſe that People did ſtay in the Letter, and went no further than the Ceremony; he declares, that it was as great Abomination to him as the Offering up of a Dog: While they were ſeparated from Jeſus Chriſt, in whom his Soul reſted, and was pacified, they were not Expiations, but Provocations; they were not Propitiations for Sins, but Abominations in themſelves. But take theſe as the Shadows of ſuch a living Subſtance; take them as Remembrances of him who was to come, and behold Jeſus Chriſt lying in theſe Swadling-cloaths of Ceremonies, until the Fulneſs of Time ſhould come that he might be manifeſted in the Fleſh, and ſo you ſhall find eternal Life in thoſe dead Beaſts, in thoſe dumb Ceremonies; if you conſider this Lamb of God ſlain in all theſe Sacrifices, from the Beginning of the World, then you preſent a ſweet ſmelling Savour to God, then you offer the true Propitiation for the Sins of the World, then he will delight more in that Sacrifice than all other perſonal Obedience.

But what if I ſhould ſay, That the Goſpel it ſelf is a killing Letter, and Miniſtration of Death, being ſevered from Chriſt? I ſhould ſay nothing amiſs, but what *Paul* ſpeaketh, that his Goſpel was a Savour of Death to many; take the moſt powerful Preaching, the moſt ſweet Diſcourſe, the

most plain Writings of the free Grace and Salvation in the Gospel, take all the Preachings of Jesus Christ himself and his Apostles, and you shall not find Life in them, unless ye be led by that Spirit of Christ unto himself, who is the Resurrection and the Life: It will no more save you than the Covenant of Works, unless that Word abide and dwell in your Hearts, to make you believe in Him, and embrace Him with your Souls, whom God hath sent; suppose you heard all, and heard it gladly, and learned it, and could discourse well upon it, and teach others, yet if you be not driven out of your selves, out of your own Righteousness, as well as Sins, and pursued to this City of Refuge, Jesus Christ, you have not eternal Life. Your Knowledge of the truth of the Gospel, and your Obedience to God's Law will certainly kill you; and as certainly, as your Ignorance and Disobedience, unless you have embraced in your Soul, that good Thing Jesus Christ contained in these Truths, who is the Diamond of that Golden Ring of the Scriptures; and unless your Soul embrace these Promises as Soul-saving, as containing the chief Good, and worthy of all Acceptation, as well as your Mind receive these as true and faithful Sayings, 1 *Tim.* i. 15.

Thus ye see Christ Jesus is either the Subject of all in the Scriptures, or the End of it all. He is the very proper Subject of the Gospel: *Paul* knew nothing but Christ crucified in his Preaching; and he is the very proper *End* and Scope *of the Law for Righteousness*, Rom. x. 3. All the Preaching of a Covenant of Works, all the Curses and Threatnings of the Bible, all the rigid Exactions of Obedience, all come to this one great Design; not that we may set about such a walking to please God, or do something to pacifie Him, but that we being concluded under Sin and Wrath on the one Hand, and an impossibility to save our selves on the other Hand, *Gal.* iii. 22. *Rom.* v. 20, 21. may be pursued unto Jesus Christ for Righteousness and Life, who is both able to save us, and ready to welcome us. Therefore the Gospel opens the Door of Salvation in Christ, the Law is behind us with Fire and Sword, and Destruction pursuing us; and all for this End, that Sinners may come to him and have Life. Thus the Law is made the Pedagogue of the Soul to lead to Christ, Christ is behind us, cursing, condemning, threatning us, and He is before with streatched-out Arms ready to receive us, bless us, and save us, inviting, promising, exhorting to come and have Life. Christ is on Mount *Sinai*, delivering the Law with Thunders, *Acts* vii. 38. and he is on Mount *Zion*, in the calm Voice; He is both upon the Mountain of Cursings and Blessings, and on both doing the Part of a Mediator, *Gal.* iii. 19, 20. It is Love that is in his Heart which made him first cover his Countenance with Frowns and Threats, and 'tis Love that again displays it self in his smiling Countenance. Thus Souls are inclosed with Love pursuing, and Love receiving: And thus the Law which seems most contrary to the Gospel, testifies of Christ, it gives him this Testimony, that except Salvation be in him, it is no where else. The Law says, It is not in me, seek it not in Obedience, I can do nothing but destroy you if you abide under my Jurisdiction. The Ceremonies and Sacrifices say, if you can behold the End of this Ministry (if a Vail be not upon your Hearts, as it was on *Moses* Face, 2 *Cor.* iii. 13, 14.) you may see where it is, 'tis not in your Obedience, but in the Death and Suffering of the Son of God, whom we represent. Then the Gos-

ſpel takes all theſe Coverings and Vails away, and gives a plain and open Teſtimony of him, *There is no Name under Heaven to be ſaved by, but Chriſt's.* The Old Teſtament ſpake by Figures and Signs, as dumb Men do, but the New ſpeaks in plain Words, and with open Face. Now I ſay, for all this that there is no Salvation but in him, yet many Souls, not only thoſe who live in their groſs Sins, and have no Form of Godlineſs, but even the better Sort of People, that have ſome Knowledge and Civility, and a kind of Zeal for God, yet *they do not come to him that they may have Life,* Rom. x. 1. 2, 3. *they do not ſubmit to the Righteouſneſs of God.* Here is the March that divides the Ways of Heaven, and Hell, coming to Jeſus Chriſt, and forſaking our ſelves: The Confidence of theſe Souls is chiefly or only in that little Knowledge, or Zeal, or Profeſſion they have, they do not as really abhor themſelves for their own Righteouſneſs, as for their Unrighteouſneſs, they make that the Covering of their Nakedneſs and Filthineſs, which is in it ſelf as menſtruous and unclean as any Thing. It is now the very Propenſion and natural Inclination of our Hearts, to ſtand upright in our ſelves: Faith bows a Soul's back, to take on Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, but Preſumption lifts up a Soul upon its own Bottom, *How can ye believe that ſeek Honour one of another?* The Engagements of the Soul to its own Credit or Eſtimation, the Engagements of Self-Love, and Self-honour, do lift up a Soul, that it cannot ſubmit to God's Righteouſneſs, to Righteouſneſs in another. And therefore many do dream and think that they have eternal Life, who ſhall awake in the End, and find that it was but a Dream, a Night-fancy.

Now from all this, I would enforce this Duty upon your Conſciences, to ſearch the Scriptures, if you think to have eternal Life, ſearch them, if you would know Chriſt, whom to know is eternal Life; then again ſearch them, for theſe are they that teſtifie of him. Searching imports Diligence, much Diligence, 'tis a ſerious Work, 'tis not a common ſeeking of an eaſie and common Thing, but 'tis a Search and Scrutiny for ſome hidden Thing, for ſome ſpecial Thing. 'Tis not bare reading of the Scriptures that will anſwer this Duty, except it be diligent and daily reading, and 'tis not that alone, except the Spirit within meditate on them, and by Meditation accompliſh a diligent Search. There is ſome hidden Secret that that you muſt ſearch for, that is incloſed within the Covering of Words, and Sentences, there is a Myſtery of Wiſdom that you muſt apply your Hearts to ſearch out, *Eccl.* vii. 5. Jeſus Chriſt is the Treaſure that is hid in this Field, O a precious Treaſure of eternal Life! Now then, Souls, ſearch into the Fields of the Scriptures, *Prov.* ii. 4. for him as for hid Treaſure. It is not only Truth you muſt ſeek and buy, and not ſell it, but 'tis Life you would ſearch: Here is an Object that may not only take up your Underſtandings, but ſatisfie your Hearts. Think not you have found all when you have found the Truth there, and learned it: No, except you have found Life there, you have found nothing, you have miſſed the Treaſure. If you would profit by the Scriptures, you muſt bring both your Underſtandings and your Affections to them, and depart not till they both return full: If you bring your Underſtanding to ſeek the Truth, you may find Truth, but not *truly*: You may find it, but you are not found of it: You may lead Truth captive, and incloſe it in a Priſon of your Mind, and encompaſs it about with a Guard of corrupt

tions, that it shall have no Issue, no out going to the Rest of your Souls and Ways, and no Influence on them; you may know the Truth, but you are not known of it, and brought in Captivity to the Obedience of it. The Treasure that is hid in the Scriptures is Jesus Christ, whose intire and perfect Name is, *Way, Truth, and Life*. He is a living Truth and true Life: Therefore Christ is the adequate Object of the Soul, commensurable to all its Faculties. He has Truth in him to satisfie the Mind, and has Life and Goodness in him to satiate the Heart: Therefore if thou wouldst find Jesus Christ, bring thy whole Soul to seek him, as *Paul* expresseth it. He is true and faithful, and worthy of all Acceptation, then bring thy Judgment to find the Light of Truth, and thy Affections to imbrace the Life of Goodness that is in him. Now, as much as ye find of him, so much have ye profited in the Scriptures: If you find commands there which you cannot obey, search again, and you may find Strength under that Command; dig a little deeper, and you shall find Jesus the End of an impossible Command: And when you have found him, you have found Life and Strength to obey, and you have found a Propitiation and Sacrifice for transgressing and not obeying. If you find Curses in it, Search again, and you shall find Jesus Christ under that, made a Curse for us; you thall find him the End of the Curse, for Righteousness to every one that believes. When you know all the Letter of the Scripture, yet you must search into the Spirit of it, that it may be imprinted into your Spirits: All you know does you no good but as 'tis received in Love, unless your Souls become a living Epistle, and the Word without be written on the Heart, you have found nothing. As for you that cannot read the Scriptures, if it be possible, take that Pains to learn to read them. O if you knew what they contain, and whom they bear Witness of, you would have little Quietness till you could read, at least his Love-epistles to Sinners: And if you cannot learn, be not discouraged, but if your Desires within be fervent, your Endeavours to hear it read by others will be more earnest. But it is not so much the reading of much of it that profiteth, as the pondering of these Things in your Hearts, and digesting them by frequent Meditation, till they become the Food of the Soul: This was *David's* Way, and by this he grew to the Stature of a tall and well-bodyed Christian.

Eph. ii. 20. *And builded upon the Foundation of the Apostles*, &c.

BElievers are the Temple of the living God, in which he dwells and walks: 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. Every one of them is a little Sanctuary and Temple to his Majesty, *Sanctifie the Lord of Hosts in your Hearts*; though he be the high and lofty One that inhabits Eternity, yet he is pleased to come down to this poor Cottage of a Creature's Heart, and dwell in it: Is not this as great a humbling and condescending, for the Father to come down off his Throne of Glory, to the poor base Foot-stool of the Creature's Soul, as for the Son to come down in the State of a Servant, and become in the Form of sinful Flesh. But then he is a Temple and Sanctuary to them, *and he shall be to you a Sanctuary*, Isa. viii. *a Place of Refuge, a Secret hiding Place*. Now, as every one is a little separated retired Temple, so they all conjoyned make up one Temple, one visible Body in which he dwells: Therefore

fore *Peter* calls them living Stones, built up into a ſpiritual Houſe to God, 1. *Pet.* ii. 5. All theſe little Temples make up one Houſe and Temple, fitly joyned together, in which God ſhews manifeſt Signs of his Preſence and working: Unto this the Apoſtle in this Place alludes. The Communion, and Union of Chriſtians with God, is of ſuch a Nature, that all the Relations and Points of Conjunction in the Creatures are taken to reſemble it, and hold it out to us. We are *Citizens*, ſaith he, and *Domeſticks*, *Houſhold Men*, and ſo dwell in his Houſe; and then *we are his Houſe beſide*: Now ye know there are two principal Things in a Houſe, the Foundation and the Corner-Stone; the one ſupports the building, the other unites it, and holds it together: Theſe two Parts of this ſpiritual building are here pointed at: The Foundation of every particular Stone, and of the whole Building is the Doctrine of the Prophets and Apoſtles, as holding out Jeſus Chriſt to Souls, the Rock on which our Houſe ſhall be builded: Not the Apoſtles, or Prophets, far leſs Paſtors and Teachers ſince; for they are but, at beſt, Workers together with God and imployed in the building of the Houſe; nor yet their Doctrine, but as it holds out that true Foundation that God had laid in *Sion*, *Iſa.* xxviii. which is Jeſus Chriſt, for other Foundation can no Man lay. And then the Corner ſtone is that ſame Jeſus Chriſt, who reaches from the Bottom even to the Top of the Building, and immediately touches every Stone, and both quickens it in it ſelf, and unites them together.

Well then, here is a ſure Foundation to build our eternal Happineſs upon, the Word of God that endures for ever holds it out to us: All Men are building upon ſomething, every Man is about ſome Eſtabliſhment of his Hopes, lays ſome Foundation of his Confidence, which he may ſtand upon. They are one of the two that Chriſt ſpeaks of: *Luke* vi. 46. One builds on the *Rock*, another on the *Sand*: Now as the Foundation is, ſo is the Houſe; a changeable Foundation makes a falling Houſe, a ſure Foundation makes an unchangeable Houſe; a Houſe without a Foundation will prove quickly no Houſe, now whatſoever Men build their Hope and Confidence upon, beſide the Word of God, his ſure Promiſe and ſure Covenant, and Jeſus Chriſt in them, they build upon no Foundation, or upon a ſandy Foundation. *All Fleſh is Graſs, and the Flower and Perfection of it is as the Flower of the Field*, here is the Name and Character of all created Perfections, of the moſt excellent Endowments of Mind, of all the ſpecious Actions of Man, 'tis all but vaniſhing and Vanity, every Man at his beſt Eſtate is ſuch, yea altogether ſuch: You who have no more to build upon but your Proſperity and Wealth, O that is but Sand and Dung; would any Man build a Houſe upon a Dung-hill. You who have no other Hope, but in your own good Prayers, and Meanings, your own Reformations, and Repentances, your Profeſſions, and Practiſes, know this, that your Hope is like a Spider's Houſe, like the Web that ſhe hath laborioufly exerciſed her ſelf about all the Week over, and then when you lean upon that Houſe it ſhall fall through, and not ſuſtain your Weight: Whatſoever it be, beſide this living Stone Jeſus Chriſt, who is the very Subſtance of the Word, and Promiſes, it ſhall unoubtedly prove thy Shame, and Confuſion: But behold the Oppoſition the Prophet makes between the Word and theſe other Things, *the Word of our God ſhall ſtand for ever*, Iſa. xl. 6, 7, 8. And therefore *Peter* makes it an *incorruptible*

Seed

Seed of which Believers are begotten, 1 *Peter* i. 23. It is the unchangeable Truth and immutable Faithfulneſs of God that makes his Word ſo ſure, *'tis build-ed up to the Heavens.* Therefore the Pſalmiſt often commends the Word of Lord as a *tryed Word, as purified* ſeven times, it hath endured the Tryal and Proof of all Men, of all Temptations, of all Generations, it hath often been put in the Furnace of Queſtions, and Doubtings; it hath often been tryed in the Fire of Afflictions, but it came forth like pure Gold, without Droſs. This is Faith's Foundation, *God hath ſpoken in his Holineſs*, and therefore, though all Men be Liars, yet God will be found true; he deceives none, and is deceived of none. The Lord hath taken a Latitude to himſelf in his Working, he loves to ſhew his Sovereignty in much of that; and therefore he changes it in Men, and upon Men as he pleaſeth, yet he hath condeſcended to limit and bound himſelf by his Word, and in this to ſhew his Faithfulneſs. And therefore, though Heaven and Earth ſhould paſs away, though he ſhould annihilate this World, and create new ones, yet *not one Jot of his Word ſhall fail.* The Earth is eſtabliſhed ſure, though it hath no Foundation, for the Word of his command ſupports it: And yet a Believer's Confidence is upon a ſurer Ground; *Though the Earth ſhould be removed, yet it cannot paſs or fail*, ſaith our LORD: And therefore the Pſalmiſt uſeth to boaſt in God, *That though the Earth were moved, and the Floods lifted up their Voice, yet he would not fear*, becauſe his Foundation was unſhaken for all that; the Word is not moved, when the World is moved, and therefore he was not moved: The World's Stability depends upon a Word of Command, but our Salvation depends on a Word of Promiſe. Now, ye know, Promiſes put an Obligation upon the Perſon, which Commands do not: A Man may change his Commands as he pleaſes to his Children or Servants, but he may not change his Promiſes, therefore the Promiſes of God put an Obligation upon him, who is Truth itſelf, not to fail in Performance; or rather he is to himſelf, by his unchangeable Will and good Pleaſure, by his Faithfulneſs and Truth, an obliging and binding Law: When no Creature could ſet Bounds to him, he incloſes himſelf within the Bounds of Promiſes to us, and gives all Fleſh Liberty to challenge him if he be not faithful.

Now *all the Promiſes of God are yea, and Amen, in Jeſus Chriſt*, that is eſtabliſhed, and confirmed in him: Chriſt is the Surety of them, and ſo the Certainty and Stability of them depends upon Him, at leaſt to our Senſe; for God in all his Dealing condeſcends to our Weakneſs, that we may have ſtrong Conſolation; a Promiſe might ſuffice to ground our Faith, but he addeth an Oath to his Promiſe, and He takes Chriſt Surety for the Performance; and therefore Chriſt may be called the Truth indeed, the ſubſtantial Word of God, for he is the very Subſtance of the written and preached Word; and then he is the Certainty and Aſſurance of it, the Scriptures teſtifie of him, and lead us to this Rock higher than we, to build upon, and againſt this the Gates of Hell cannot prevail: If the Word lead not a Soul into Chriſt himſelf, that Soul hath no Foundation; though thou hear the Word, though thou know the Word, yea, ſuppoſe thou couldſt teach others, and inſtruct the Ignorant, yet all that will be no Foundation, as good as none, except thou do it; and What is it to do the Word? But believe in him whom the Word teſtifies of; this

is the Work of God, to resign thy Soul to his Mercies, and Merits, and have no Confidence in the Flesh: To scrape out all the Rubbish of Works and Performances, and Parts, out of the Foundation, and singly to roll thy Soul's Weight upon God's Promises, and Christ's Purchase; to look, with *Paul*, on all Things beside, in thee, and about thee, as Dung and Dross, that thou can lean no Weight upon, and to remove that Dunghill from the Foundation of thy Hope, that Jesus Christ may be the only Foundation of thy Soul, as God hath laid him in the Church for a sure Foundation, *That whoso believeth in him may not be ashamed*: Whatever beside a Soul be established on, though it appear very solid and the Soul be settled and fixed upon it, yet a Day will come that will unsettle that Soul, and raze that Foundation; either it shall be now done in thy Conscience, or it must be done at Length, when that great Tempest of God's Indignation shall blow from Heaven against all Unrighteousness of Men, in the Day of Accounts, then shall thy House fall, and the Fall of it shall be great. But a Soul established upon the sure Promises, and upon Christ, in whom they are *Yea*, and *Amen*, shall abide that Storm, and in that Day have Confidence before God, have wherewith to answer, in Jesus Christ, all the Challenges of Divine Justice, and the Accusations of Conscience, *He that trusts in him shall be as Mount Sion, which cannot be moved.* You see all Things else change, and therefore Mens Hopes and Joys perish; even here, the Temptations and Revolutions of the Times undermines their Confidence, and Joy; and the Blasts of the Northern Wind of Affliction blows away their Hopes.

Now as Christ is the Foundation, so he is the Corner-stone of the Building; It is Christ who hath removed that Partition Wall between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, even the Ceremonies of the one, and the Atheism of the other: *He is our Peace*, who hath made two one. The two Sides of the House of God are united by this Corner-stone Jesus Christ. Thus we, who were the Temples of Satan, are made the Temples of God; this poor Stranger-*Gentiles*, who had no Interest in the Covenant of Promises, come to share with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and to be founded upon the Doctrine of the Prophets, who taught the *Jewish* Church: Christ is the Bond of Christians; this is the Head into which all the Members should grow up into a Body. Distance of Place, Difference of Nations, Distinction of Languages, all these cannot separate the Members of Jesus Christ; they are more one, though consisting of divers Nations, Tongues, and Customs, and Dispositions, than the People of one Nation, or Children of one Family; for one Lord, one Spirit, unites all: Alas, that all are not united in Affection, and Judgment; why do the Sides of this House contend, and wrestle one against another? When there is such a Corner-stone joyning them together? Are not there many Christians who cannot endure to look upon one another, who are yet both placed in one building of the Temple of God? Alas, this is sad and shamefull! But that which I would especially have observed in this, is, that Jesus Christ is such a Foundation that reacheth throughout the whole Building, and immediately toucheth every Stone of the Building; 'tis such a Foundation as riseth from the Bottom to the Top; and therefore Jesus Christ is both the Author and Finisher of our Faith, the Beginning and the End; the first Stone and the last Stone of our Building must rise upon him.

and by him; the least Degree of Grace, and the greatest Perfection of it, both are in him; and therefore Christians should be most dependent Creatures, dependent in their first Being, and in after Well-being in, their being, and growing, wholly dependent upon Christ, that *out of his Fulness they may receive Grace, and then more Grace for Grace*, that all may appear to be Grace indeed. Now I beseech you, my beloved in the Lord, to know whereupon ye are builded, or ought to be builded. There are two great Errors in the Time, take heed of them, one is the Doctrine of some, and another is the Practice of the most Part: Some do prefer their own Fancies, and Night-dreams, and the Imaginations of their own Heart to the Word of God, and upon pretence of Revelation of new Light, do cast a Mist upon that Word of God, which is a Light that hath shined from the Beginning. Be not deceived, but try the Spirits whether they be of God, or not. There are many pretend to much of the Spirit, and therefore cry out against the Word, as *Letter*, as *Flesh*: But, my Brethren, believe not every Doctrine that calls it self a Spirit, *That Spirit is not of God that bears not God's Voice*, as Christ reasoneth against the *Jews*; seek ye more of the Spirit of Christ which he promiseth, who is a Spirit that teacheth all Things, and bringeth to Remembrance these blessed Sayings, and leads us in all Truth: It shall be both safest and sweetest to you to meditate on that Word of the Prophets and Apostles, and the Entrance into it shall give you Light: An old Light which was from the Beginning, and therefore a true Light, (for all Truth is Eternal;) and yet a new Light to your Sense and Feeling: It's both an old Command, and a new Command; an old Word, and a new Word; if thou search it by the Spirit's Inspiration, that old Word shall be made new, that Letter made Spirit and Life: Such are the Words that Christ speaks. But yet there are many who do not reject the Scriptures in Judgment, who notwithstanding do not build on them in Practice: Alas, it may be said of the most Part of professed Christians among us, that they are not builded upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, but upon the Sayings of fallible and weak Men! What ground have many of you for your Faith, but because the Minister saith so, you believe so? The most Part live in an implicite Faith, and practise that in themselves which they condemn in the Papists. You do not labour to search the Scriptures, that upon that Foundation you may build your Faith in the questioned Truths of this Age, that so you may be able to answer to those that ask a Reason of the Faith that is in you. Alas, simple Souls, you believe every Thing, and yet really believe nothing, because you believe not the Word, as the Word of the living God, but take it from Men upon their Authority! Therefore when a Temptation cometh, when any gainsayings of the Truth, you cannot stand against it, because your Faith hath no Foundation, but the Sayings of Men, or Acts of Assemblies. And therefore as Men whom you trust with holding out Light unto you, hold out Darkness instead of Light, you embrace that Darkness also: But, I beseech you, be builded upon the Foundation of the Prophets, and Apostles, not upon them, but upon that whereon they were builded, the infallible Truths of God. You have the Scriptures, Search them; since you have reasonable Souls, Search them: Other Mens Faith will not save; you cannot see to walk to Heaven by other Mens Light, more than you can see by their Eyes: You have Eyes of your own, Souls of your own, subordi-

nate to none but the God of Spirits, and Lord of Conſciences of Jeſus Chriſt: And therefore examine all that is ſpoken to you from the Word, according to the Word, and receive no more upon Truſt from Men, but as you find it, upon Trial to be the Truth of God.

2 Tim. i. 13. *Hold faſt that Form of ſound Words, which thou haſt heard of me, in Faith, and Love,* &c.

HEre is the Sum of Religion; here you have a Compend of the Doctrine of the Scriptures: All Divine Truths may be reduced to theſe two Heads, Faith, and Love; What we ought to believe, and what we ought to do: This is all the Scriptures teach, and this is all we have to learn. What have we to know, but what God hath revealed of Himſelf to us? And, What have we to do, but what he commands us? In a word, What have we to learn in this World, but to believe in Chriſt, and love Him, and ſo live to Him? This is the Duty of Man, and this is the Dignity of Man, and the Way to eternal Life: Therefore the Scriptures, that are given to be a *Lamp to our Feet,* and a *Guide to our Paths,* contain a perfect and exact Rule, *credendorum & faciendorum,* of Faith, and Manners; of Doctrine, and Practice. We have in the Scriptures many Truths revealed to us of God, and of the Works of his Hands; many precious Truths: But that which moſt of all concerns us, is to know God and our ſelves; this is the ſpecial Excellency of the reaſonable Creature, that it is made capable to know its Creator, and to reflect upon its own Being. Now, we have to know our ſelves, What we are now, and what Man once was; and accordingly, to know of God, what he once revealed of himſelf, and what he doth now reveal: I ſay, the Scriptures hold out to our Conſideration a twofold Eſtate of Mankind, and according to theſe, a twofold Revelation of the Myſtery of God: We look on Man now, and we find him another Thing than he was once; but we do not find God one Thing at one Time, and another Thing at another Time: for there is *no Shadow of Change in him,* and, *He is the ſame Yeſterday, and to Day, and for ever:* Therefore we ask not, What he was, and what he is now, but how he manifeſts himſelf differently, according to the different Eſtates of Man: as we find in the Scriptures, Man once righteous and bleſſed, *Eccleſ.* vii. 29. and God making him ſuch according to his own Image, *Col.* iii. 10. *Eph.* iv. 24. *in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*; we find him in Communion and Friendſhip with God, ſet next to the Divine Majeſty, and above the Works of his Hand, and all Things under his Feet: How holy was he? And how happy? And happy he could not chuſe but be, ſince he was holy, being conformed, and like unto God in his Will, and Affection, chooſing that ſame Delight, that ſame Pleaſure with God, in his Underſtanding, knowing God and his Will; and likewiſe, his own Happineſs: In ſuch a Conformity, he could not but have much Communion with him, that had ſuch Conformity to him, Union being the Foundation of Communion, and great Peace and ſolid Tranquility in him.

Now, in this State of Mankind God expreſſes his Goodneſs, and Wiſdom, and Power, his Holineſs, and Righteouſneſs. Theſe are the Attributes that ſhine moſt brightly. In the very Morning of the Creation, God revealed himſelf to Man as a holy and juſt God, whoſe Eyes could behold no Iniquity; and therefore he made him upright, and made a Covenant of Life and Peace with him, to give him immortal and eternal Life; to continue him in his happy Eſtate, if ſo be he continued in well-doing, *Rom.* x. 5. *Do this and live.* In which Covenant, indeed, there were ſome Out-breakings of the glorious Grace, and free Condeſcendency of God; for it was no leſs free Grace, and undeſerved Favour, to promiſe Life to his Obedience, than now to promiſe Life to our Faith; ſo that if the Lord had continued that Covenant with us, we ought to have called it Grace, and would have been ſaved by Grace as well as now; though it be true, that there is ſome more Occaſion given to Man's Nature to boaſt and glory in that Way, yet not at all before God, *Rom.* iv. 2.

But we have ſcarcely found Man in ſuch an Eſtate, till we have found him ſinful and miſerable, and fallen from his Excellency. That Sun ſhined in the dawning of the Creation; but before ye can well know what it is, 'tis eclipſed, and darkned with Sin and Miſery; as if the Lord had only ſet up ſuch a Creature in the Firmament of Glory, to let him know how bleſſed he could make him, and wherein his Bleſſedneſs conſiſts; and then preſently to throw him down from his Excellency: When you find him mounting up to the Heavens, and ſpreading himſelf thus in Holineſs and Happineſs, like a Bay-tree: Behold again, and you find him not; though you ſeek him, you ſhall not find him, his Place doth not know him: He is like one that comes out with a great Majeſty upon a Stage, and perſonates ſome Monarch, or Emperor, in the World, and then ere you can well gather your Thoughts, to know what he is, he is turn'd off the Stage, and appears in ſome baſe and deſpicable Appearance; ſo quickly is Man ſtript of all theſe glorious Ornaments of Holineſs, and puts on the vile Rags of Sin and Wretchedneſs, and is caſt from the Throne of Eminency above the Creatures, and from Fellowſhip with God, to be a Slave and Servant to the Duſt of his Feet, and to have Communion with the Devil and his Angels. And now ye have Man holden out in Scripture as the only wretched Piece of the Creation, as the very Plague of the World; *The whole Creation groaning under him,* Rom. viii. *and in pain to be delivered of ſuch a burthen,* of ſuch an Execration, and Curſe, and Aſtoniſhment: You find the Teſtimony of the Word condemns him altogether, concludes him under Sin, and then under a Curſe, and makes all Fleſh guilty in God's Sight. The Word ſpeaks otherwiſe of us than we think of our ſelves. *Their Imagination is only Evil continually,* Gen. vi. 5. O then, What muſt our Affections be, that are certainly more corrupt! What then muſt our Way be? *All Fleſh hath corruped their Way, and done abominable Works, and none doth good,* Pſal. xiv. 1, 2, 3. But many flee in, unto their good Hearts as their laſt Refuge, when they are beaten from theſe Out-works of their Actions and Ways: But the Scripture ſhall ſtorm that alſo; *The Heart is deceitful above all Things, who can know it?* Jer. xvii. 9. *It is deſperately wicked*: In a Word, Man is become the moſt lamentable Spectacle in the World; a compend of all Wickedneſs, and Miſery in-

incloſed within the Walls of Inability and Impoſſibility to help himſelf, ſhut up within a Priſon of Deſpair, a ſtinking, loathſome, and irkſome Dungeon: 'Tis like the myrie Pit that *Jeremiah* was caſt into, that there was no out-coming, and no pleaſant Abode in it.

Now, Man's Eſtate being thus, nay, having made himſelf thus, *and ſought out to himſelf ſuch ſad Inventions*, Eccl. vii. 29. *and having deſtroyed himſelf*, Hoſ. xiii. 9. What think ye? Should any pity him? If he had fallen in ſuch a Pit of Miſery ignorantly, and unwillingly, he had been an Object of Compaſſion; but having caſt himſelf Head-long into it, Who ſhould have Pity on him? Or, who ſhould go aſide to ask how he did, or bemoan him? *Jer.* xv. 5. *But behold the Lord pities Man as a Father doth his Children*, Pſal. ciii. His Compaſſions fail not; He comes by ſuch a loathſome and contemptible Object, *and caſts his Skirts over it, and ſaith, Live*, Ezek. xvi. *And maketh it a Time of Love.* I ſay, no Fleſh could have expected any more of God, than to make Man happy, and holy, and to promiſe him Life in Well-doing: But to repair that Happineſs after 'tis wilfully loſt, and to give Life to Evil-doers and Sinners. O how far was it from *Adam*'s Expectation when he fled from God? Here then is the Wonder, that when Men and Angels were in Expectation of the Revelation of his Wrath from Heaven againſt their Wickedneſs, and the Execution of the Curſe Man was concluded under, that even then God is purſuing Man, and purſues him with Love, and opens up to him his very Heart and Bowels of Love in Jeſus Chriſt! Behold then the ſecond Revelation and Manifeſtation of God, in a Way of Grace, pure Grace, of Mercy and Pity towards loſt Sinners. *The Kindneſs of God hath appeared, not by Works, but according to his abundant Mercy ſhewed in Chriſt Jeſus*, Tit. iii. 4, 5. So then, we have this purpoſe of God's Love unfolded to us in the Scriptures, and this is the Subſtance of them, both Old and New Teſtament, or the End of them, *Rom.* x. 4. Chriſt is the End of the Law to all Sinners concluded under Sin, and a Curſe: By it, our Lord Jeſus, the good *Ebedmelech*, comes and caſts down a Cord to us, and draws us up out of the Pit of Sin and Miſery; he comes to this Priſon, and opens the Doors to let Captives free; ſo then we have God holden out to us as a Redeemer, as a Repairer of our Breaches; God in Chriſt reconciling the World, *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf, but in me is thy Help found*, Hoſ. xiii. 9. *He finds to himſelf a Ranſom to ſatisfie his Juſtice;* Job xxxiii. 24. He finds a Propitiation to take away Sin, a Sacrifice to pacifie and appeaſe his Wrath; he finds one of our Brethren, but his own Son in whom he is well-pleaſed. And then holds out all this to Sinners, that they may be ſatisfied in their own Conſciences, as he is in his own Mind: God hath ſatisfied himſelf in Chriſt, you have not that to do: He is not now to be reconciled to us, for he was never really at Odds, though he covered his Countenance with Frowns, and Threats, ſince the Fall, and hath appeared in Fire, and Thunders, and Whirlwind, which are terrible, yet his Heart had always Love in it to ſuch Perſons; and therefore he is come near in Chriſt, and about reconciling us to himſelf; Here is the Buſineſs then, to have our Souls reconciled to him, to take away the Enmity within us; and as he is ſatisfied with his Son, ſo to ſatisfie our ſelves with him, and be as well-pleaſed in his Redemption and Purchaſe, as the Father is, and then you believe indeed in him.

Now if this were accomplished, What have we more to do, but to love him, and to live to him? When you have found in the Scripture, and believed with the Heart, what Man once was, and what he now is; what God once appeared, and what he now manifests himself in the Gospel, ye have no more to do, but to search in the same Scriptures what ye henceforth ought to be: Ye who find your Estate recovered in Christ, ask, *What manner of Persons ought we to be!* And the Scripture shall also give you that Form of sound Words, which may not only teach you to believe in him, but to love him, and obey his Commands: The Law that before condemned you, is now by Christ put in your Hands to guide you, and conduct you in the Way, and teacheth you how to live henceforth to his Glory. *The Grace of God that hath appeared unto all Men,* Tit. ii. 12. *teacheth us, that denying Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, we should live Godly, and Righteously, and Soberly in this present World.* Here is the Sum of the Rule of your Practice and Conversation, Piety towards God, Equity towards Men, and Sobriety towards our selves, Self-denyal, and World-denyal, and Lust-denyal, to give up with the World, and our own Lusts, henceforth to have no more to do with them, to resign them, not for a Time, not in Part, but wholly, and for ever in Affection, and by Parts in Practice and Endeavour, and then to resign and give up our selves to him, to live to him, and to live in him.

Thus we have given you a Sum of the Doctrine of the Scriptures, of that which is to be believed, and that which is to be done as our Duty. Now we shall speak a Word of these two cardinal Graces, which are the Compend of all Graces, as the Objects of them are the Abridgment of the Scriptures: *Faith* and *Love*, these sound Words can profit us nothing, unless we hold them fast with Faith and Love.

Faith is like the Fountain-gate, Streams come out of it that cleanseth the Conscience from the Guilt of Sin, and purifieth the Heart from the Filth of Sin, because it is that which cometh to the *Fountain opened up in the House of David*, and draweth Water out of these *Wells of Salvation.* If you consider the Fall and Ruin of Mankind, you will find Infidelity and Unbelief the Fountain of it, as well as the Seal of it. Unbelief of the Law of God, of his Promises and Threatnings. This was first called in Question, and when once called in Question, it is half denyed. Hath God said so, that you shall die? 'Tis not far off, you shall not surely die: Here then was the very Beginning of Man's Ruine, he did not retain in his Knowledge, and believe with his Heart the Truth and Faithfulness, and Holiness of God; which Unbelief was conjoyned, and intermingled with much Pride, *you shall be as Gods*: He began to live out of God, in himself, not remembring that his Life was a Stream of that Divine Fountain, that being cut off from it would dry up. Now therefore our Lord Jesus Christ, an expert Saviour, and very learned, and compleat for this Work, he brings Man up out of this Pit of Misery, by that same Way he fell into it, he fell down by Unbelief, and he brings him up outof it by Faith. This is the Cord that is cast down to the Poor Soul in the Dungeon, or rather his Faith is the Dead-grip of the Cord of Divine Promises, which are sent unto the Captive Prisoner, and by Virtue thereof he is drawn out, into the Light of Salvation. Unbelief of the Law of God did first destroy Man, now the Belief of the Gospel saves him. The not-believing of the Lord's Threatn-

Threatnings, was the Beginning of his Ruin; and believing of his precious Promises, is his Salvation. I say no more, as our Destruction began at the Unbelief of the Law, so our Salvation must begin at the Belief of it. The Law and Divine Justice went out of his Sight, and so he sinned; now the Law entring into the Conscience, discovers a Man's Sins, and makes Sin abound, and that is the Beginning of our Remedy, to know our Disease. But as long as this is hid from a Man's Eyes, he is shut up in Unbelief, he is sealed and confirmed in his miserable Estate, and so kept from Jesus Christ the Remedy. Thus Unbelief, first and last destroys: Faith might have preserved *Adam*, and Faith again may restore thee, who hath fallen in *Adam*.

There is a great Mistake of Faith among us, some taking it for a strong and blind Confidence, that admits of no Questions or Doubts in the Soul; and so vainly perswading themselves that they have it; and some again conceiving it to be such an Assurance of Salvation, as instantly comforts the Soul, and looseth all Objections; and so foolishly vexing their own Souls, and disquieting themselves in vain, for the want of that, which if they understood what it is, they would find they have it. I say, many Souls conceive that to be the best Faith, that never doubted, and hath always lodged in them, and kept them in Peace since they were born. But seeing all Men were once *Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, and without God in the World*, and so without Christ also, it is certain that those Souls who have always blest themselves in their own Hearts, and cryed Peace, Peace, and were never afraid of the Wrath to come, have imbraced an Imagination and dream of their own Heart, for true Faith. It is not big and stout Words that will prove it; Men may defie the Devil and all his Works, and speak very confidently, and yet, God knows, they are Captives by him, at his Pleasure, and not far from that Misery which they think they have escaped. Satan works in them with such a crafty Conveyance, that they cannot perceive it, and how should they perceive it? For we are by Nature dead in Sins, and so cannot feel nor know that we are such: It is a Token of Life to feel Pain, a certain Token, for dead Things are senseless. You know how Jugglers may deceive your very Senses, and make them believe they see that which is not, and feel that which they feel not: Oh how much more easie is it for Satan, such an ingenious and experimented Spirit, assisted with the Help of our deceitful Hearts, to cast such a Mist over the Eyes of Hearts, and make them believe any thing? How easily may he hid our Misery from us, and make us believe 'tis well with us? And thus Multitudes of Souls perish, in the very Opinion of Salvation: That very Thing which they call Faith, that strong ungrounded Perswasion, 'tis no other thing than the Unbelief of the Heart, Unbelief, I mean of the holy Law, of Divine Justice, and the Wrath to come: For if these once entered into the Soul's Consideration, they would certainly cast down that strong Hold of vain Confidence, that Satan keeps all the House in Peace by: Now this secure and presumptuous Despising of all Threatnings, and all Convictions, it is varnished over to the poor Soul, with the Colour and Appearance of Faith in the Gospel: They think, to believe in Christ, is nothing else, but never to be afraid of Hell: Whereas it is nothing

thing elſe, but a Soul fleeing into Chriſt for fear of Hell: And fleeing from the Wrath to come to the City of Refuge.

Now again, there are ſome other Souls quite contrary minded, that run upon another Extremity: They once queſtion, whether they have Faith? And always queſtion it. You ſhall find them always out of one Doubt into another, and ſtill returning upon theſe Debates, whether am I in Chriſt, or not? And often peremptorily concluding that they are not in him, and that they believe not in him: I muſt confeſs, that a Soul muſt once queſtion the Matter, or they ſhall never be certain: Nay, a Soul muſt once conclude that it is void of God, and without Chriſt; but having diſcovered that, I ſee no more Uſe and Fruit of your frequent Debates, and Janglings about Intereſt: I would ſay then unto ſuch Souls, that if you now queſtion it, it is indeed the very Time to put it out of Queſtion. And how? Not by framing or ſeeking Anſwers to your Objections, not by ſearching into thy ſelf to find ſomething to prove it, not by mere diſputing about it, for when ſhall theſe have an End? But ſimply and plainly by ſetting about that which is queſtioned. Are you in doubt, if you be Believers? How ſhall it be reſolved then, but by believing indeed? It is now the very Time thou art called to make Application of thy Soul to Chriſt, if thou thinkeſt that thou cannot make Application of Chriſt to thy Soul: If thou cannot know if he be thine, then how ſhall thou know it, but by chooſing him for thine, and embracing him in thy Soul? Now, I ſay, if that Time which is ſpent about ſuch unprofitable Debates, were ſpent in ſolid and ſerious Endeavours about the thing in Debate, it would quickly be out of Debate; if you were more in the Obedience to thoſe Commands, than in the Diſpute, Whether you have obeyed or not, you would ſooner come to Satisfaction in it. This I ſay the rather, becauſe the weightier and principal Parts of the Goſpel are thoſe direct Acts of Faith, and Love to Jeſus Chriſt; both theſe are the out-goings of the Soul to him: Now again, Examination of our Faith and Aſſurance are but ſecondary and conſequent Reflections upon our ſelves, and are the Soul returning in again to it ſelf, to find what is within. Therefore, I ſay, a Chriſtian is principally called to the firſt, and always called; it is the chief Duty of Man, which, for no Evidence, no doubting, no queſtioning, ſhould be left undone: If ye be in any Heſitation whether you are Believers or not; I am ſure the chiefeſt Thing, and moſt concerning, is, rather to believe than to know it; it is a Chriſtian's Being to believe; 'tis indeed his Comfort and Well-being to know it; but if you do not know it, then by all Means ſo much the more ſet about it preſently; let the Soul conſider Chriſt and the precious Promiſes, and lay its Weight upon him; This you ought to do, and not to leave the other undone.

2. *Secondly*, I ſay to ſuch Souls, that it is the Miſtake of the very Nature of Faith that leads them to ſuch Perplexities, and cauſeth ſuch Inevidence: It is not ſo much the Inevidence of Marks, and Fruits, that makes them doubt, as the Miſapprehenſion of the Thing it ſelf; for as long as they miſtake it in its own Nature, no Sign, no Mark can ſatisfie in it. You take, Faith to be a Perſwaſion of God's Love, that calms and quiets the Mind. Now, ſuch a Perſwaſion needs no Sign to know it by, 'tis manifeſt by its own Preſence, as Light by its own Brightneſs. It were a fooliſh Queſtion to ask any, how they knew that they were perſwaded of anothers

Affection? The very Perſwaſion it ſelf maketh it ſelf more certain to the Soul than any Token. So then, while you queſtion whether you have Faith or not, and in the mean Time take Faith to be nothing elſe but ſuch a Perſwaſion, it is in vain to bring any Marks or Signs to convince you that you have Faith; for if ſuch a Perſwaſion and Aſſurance were in you, it would be more powerful to aſſure your Hearts of it ſelf than any thing elſe; and while you are doubting of it, it is more manifeſt that you have it not, than any Signs or Marks can be able to make it appear that you have it. If any would labour to convince a blind Man, that he ſaw the Light, and give him Signs and Tokens of the Light's ſhining, the blind Man could not believe him; for it is more certain to himſelf that he ſees not, than any Evidence can make the contrary probable: You are ſtill wiſhing and ſeeking ſuch a Faith as puts all out of Queſtion. Now, when Miniſters bring any Marks to prove you have true Faith, it cannot ſatisfie or ſettle you, becauſe your very queſtioning proves, that ye have not that which ye queſtion; if you had ſuch a Perſwaſion, you would not queſtion it. So then, as long as you are in that Miſtake concerning the true Nature of Faith, all the Signs of the Word cannot ſettle you.

But, I ſay, if once you underſtood the true Nature of Faith, it would be more clear in it ſelf unto you, than readily Marks and Signs could make it, eſpecially in the Time of Temptation: If you would know then, what it is indeed; conſider what the Word of God holds out concerning himſelf, or us, and the ſolid Belief of that in the Heart hath ſomething of the Nature of ſaving Faith in it. The Lord gives a Teſtimony concerning Man, That he *is born in Sin, that he is dead in Sins, and all his Imaginations are only Evil continually.* Now, I ſay, To receive this Truth into the Soul upon God's Teſtimony is a Point of Faith; the Lord in his Word concludes all under Sin and Wrath; ſo then, for a Soul to conclude it ſelf alſo under Sin and Wrath, is a point of Faith: Faith is the Soul's Teſtimony to God's Truth, the Word is God's Teſtimony: Now then, if a Soul receive this Teſtimony within, whether it be Law or Goſpel, 'tis an Act of Faith; if a Soul condemn it ſelf, and judge it ſelf, that is a ſetting to our Seal that God is true, who ſpeaks in his Law, and ſo 'tis a believing in God. I ſay more, to believe with the Heart, that we cannot believe, is a great Point of ſound Belief, becauſe 'tis a ſealing of that Word of God. *The Heart is deſperately wicked*, and *of our ſelves we can do nothing*. Now, I am perſwaded, if ſuch Souls knew this, they would put an End to their many Contentions and Wranglings about this Point, and would rather bleſs God that hath opened their Eyes to ſee themſelves, than contend with him for that they have no Faith: It is Light only that diſcovers Darkneſs, and Faith only that diſcerns Unbelief: 'Tis Life and Health only that feels Pain and Sickneſs; for if all were alike, nothing could be found, as in dead Bodies: Now, I ſay to ſuch Souls as believe in God the Law-giver, believe alſo in Chriſt the Redemer; and What is that? 'Tis not to know that I have Intereſt in him: No, that muſt come after; 'tis the Spirit's ſealing after believing which puts itſelf out of Queſtion, when it comes; and ſo if you had it, you needed not many Signs to know it by, at leaſt you would not doubt of it, more than he that ſees the Light can queſtion it. But I ſay, to believe in Chriſt is ſimply this; I, whatſoever I be, ungodly, wretched, polluted

luted, desperate; am willing to have Jesus Christ for my Saviour, I have no other Help, or Hope, if it be not in him, it is, I say, to lean the Weight of thy Soul on this Foundation-stone laid in *Zion*, to embrace the Promises of the Gospel albeit general, as *worthy of all Acceptation*, and wait upon the Performance of them. It is no other Thing, but to make Christ welcome, to say, even so, Lord Jesus, I am content in my Soul that thou be my Saviour, *to be found in thee, not having my own Righteousness*, I am well pleased to cast away my own as Dung, and find my self no other nor an ungodly Man. Now it is certain that many Souls that are still questioning whether they have Faith, yet do find this in their Souls, but because they know not that it is Faith which they find, they go about to seek that which is not Faith, and where it is not to be found, and so disquiet themselves in vain, and hinder Fruitfulness.

Now, the Faith of a Christian is no Fancy, 'tis not a light vain Imagination of the Brain, but it dwells in the Heart, (with the Heart Man believes) and it dwells with Love. Faith and Love we need not be curious to distinguish them: It is certain that Love is in it, and from it, 'tis in the very Bosom of it, because Faith is a Soul embracing of Christ, 'tis a choosing of him for its Portion; and then upon the Review of this goodly Portion, and from Consideration of what he is, and hath done for us, the Soul loves him still more, and is impatient of so much Distance from him. We find them conjoyned in Scripture, but they are one in the Heart: O that we studyed to have these joyntly engraven on the Heart; as they are joyned in the Word, so our Heart should be a living Epistle: Faith and Love are two Words, but one thing under different Notions: They are the Out-goings of the Soul to Christ for Life, the Breathings of the Soul after him, for more of him, when it hath once tasted how good he is: Faith is not a Speculation, or a wandring Thought of Truth, 'tis the Truth not captivated into the Mind, but dwelling in the Heart, and getting Possession of the whole Man: You know, a Man and his Will are one, not so a Man and his Mind, for he may conceive the Truth of many Things he loves not, but whatever a Man loves, that and he, in a manner, becomes one with another: Love is unitive, 'tis the most excellent Union of distant Things. The Will commands the whole Man, and hath the Office of applying of all the Faculties to their proper Works, *Illa imperat, alia exsequuntur*; therefore when once Divine Truth gets Entry into the Heart of a Man, and becomes one with his Will, and Affection, it will quickly command the whole Man to practise and execute, and then he that received the Truth in Love, is found a Walker in the Truth: Many Persons captivate Truth in their Understandings, as the Gentiles did, they held or detained it in Unrighteousness: But because it hath no Liberty to descend into the Heart, and possess that Garrison, it cannot command the Man. But O 'tis better to be Truth's Captive, than to captivate Truth, saith the Apostle; *ye obeyed from the Heart the Truth to which ye were delivered*, Rom. vi. O a blessed Captivity, to be delivered over to Truth; that is indeed Freedom, for Truth makes free, *John* viii. And it makes free where it is in Freedom, give it Freedom to command thee, and it shall indeed deliver thee from all strange Lords, and thou shalt obey it from the Heart, when it is indeed in the Heart. When the Truth of God, whether Promises, or Threatnings,

nings, or Commands, are impreſſed into the Heart, you ſhall find the Expreſſions of them in the Converſation: Faith is not an empty Aſſent to the Truth, but a receiving of it in Love, and when the Truth is received in Love, then it begins to work by Love; *Faith works by Love*, ſaith *Paul*, *Gal.* v. 6. That now is the proper Nature of its Operation, which expreſſes its own Nature: Obedience proceeding from Love to God, flows from Faith in God, and that ſhews the true and living Nature of that Faith: If the Soul within receive the Seal and Impreſſion of the truth of God, it will render the Image of that ſame Truth in all its Actions.

Love is put for all Obedience, 'tis made the very Sum and Compend of the Law, the Fulfilling of it: For the Truth is the moſt effectual and conſtraining Principle of Obedience, and withall the moſt ſweet and pleaſant: *The Love of Chriſt conſtrains us* to live to him, and not henceforth to our ſelves, 2 *Cor.* v. 15. As I ſaid, a Man and his Will is one: If you ingage it, you bind all; if you gain it, it will bring all with it. As it is the moſt ready Way to gain any Party, to ingage their Head whom they follow, and upon whom they depend: Let a Man's Love be once gained to Chriſt, and the whole Train of the Soul's Faculty, of the outward Senſes, and Operations, will follow upon it; It was an excellent and pertinent Queſtion, that Chriſt asked *Peter*, when he was going away (if *Peter* had conſidered Chriſt's Purpoſe in it, he would not have been ſo haſty and diſpleaſed) *Peter loveſt thou me*, then feed my Sheep? If a Man Love Chriſt, he will certainly ſtudy to pleaſe him, and though he ſhould do never ſo much in Obedience, 'tis no Pleaſure except it be done out of Love: O this, and more of this in the Heart, would make Miniſters feed well, and teach well, and would make People obey well; *If ye love me, keep my Commands*: Love devotes and conſecrates all that is in a Man to the Pleaſure of him whom he loves; therefore it faſhions and conforms one even againſt Nature to anothers Humour and Affection: It conſtrains not to live to our ſelves, but to him, its Joy and Delight is in him, and therefore all is given up and reſigned to him: Now as it is certain that if you love much you will do much, ſo 'tis certain that little is accepted for much, that proceeds from Love, and therefore our poor maimed and halting Obedience, is called the *fulfilling of the Law*; he is well pleaſed with it, becauſe Love is ill pleaſed with it: Love thinks nothing too much, all too little, and therefore his Love thinks any thing from us much, ſince Love would give more; he accepts that which is given, the Lover's Mite caſt into the Treaſure, is more than ten Times ſo much outward Obedience from another Man; he meets Love with Love; if the Soul's Deſire be towards the Love of his Name, if Love offer though a farthing, his Love receiving it, counts it a Crown: Love offering a Preſent of Duty, finds many Imperfections in it, and covers any Good that is in it, ſeems not to regard it, and then beholds it as a Recompence; his Love receiving the Preſent from us, covers a Multitude of Infirmities that are in it: And thus what in the Deſire and Endeavour of Love on our Part, and what in the Acceptation of what is done on his Part, Love is the fulfilling of the Law. 'Tis an uſual Proverb, *all Things are as they are taken*. Love is the fulfilling of the Law, becauſe our loving Father takes it ſo; he takes as much Delight in the poor Childrens Willingneſs, as in the more aged's Strength;

the Offer and Endeavour of the one pleaſeth him, as well as the Performance of the other.

The Love of God is the fulfilling of the Law, for it is a living Law, it is the Law written on the Heart, it is the Law of a Spirit of Life within, *Quis legem det amantibus? Major lex amor ſibi ipſi eſt.* You almoſt need not preſcribe any Rules, or ſet over the Head of Love, the Authority and Pain of a Command, for it is a greater Law to it ſelf, it hath within its own Boſom as deep an Engagement and Obligation to any thing that may pleaſe God, as you can put upon it; for it is in it ſelf the very Engagement and Bond of the Soul to him. This it is indeed which will do him Service, and that is the Service which he likes: It is that only ſerves him conſtantly and pleaſantly, and conſtantly it cannot ſerve him, which doth it not pleaſantly, for it is Delight only that makes it conſtant. Violent Motions may be ſwift, but not durable, they laſt not long: Fear and Terror is a kind of external Impulſe, that may drive a Soul ſwiftly to ſome Duty; but becauſe that is not one with the Soul, it cannot endure long, 'tis not good Company to the Soul. But Love, making a Duty pleaſant, becomes one with the Soul, it incorporates with it, and becomes like its Nature to it, that though it ſhould not move ſo ſwiftly, yet it moves more conſtantly. And what is Love but the very Motion of the Soul to God? And ſo till it have attained that, to be in him, it can find no Place of Reſt. Now this is only the Service that he is pleaſed with, which comes from Love, becauſe he ſees his own Image in it: For Love in us, is nothing elſe but the Impreſſion and Stamp that God's Love to us makes on the Heart; 'tis the very Reflection of that ſweet warm Beam; ſo then when his Love reflects back unto himſelf, carrying our Heart and Duty with it, he knoweth his own Superſcription, he loves his own Image in ſuch a Duty: *He that loveth me, and continueth in my Love, I will love him, and I and my Father will come and make our Abode with him,* John xiv. 23. Here now is an Evidence that he likes it, for he muſt needs like that Place he chooſes to dwell in; he who hath ſuch a glorious Manſion, and Palace above, he muſt needs love that Soul dearly, that he will prefer it to his high and holy Place.

Now I know it will be the ſecret Queſtion and Complaint of ſome Souls, how ſhall I get Love to God? I cannot love him, my Heart is ſo deſperately wicked, I cannot ſay as *Peter, Lord thou knoweſt that I love thee.* I ſhall not inſiſt upon the Diſcovery of your Love unto you by Marks and Signs, only I ſay, if thou indeed from thy Heart deſires to love him, and art grieved that there is not this Love in thy Soul to him, which becomes ſo Love-worthy a Saviour, then thou indeed loveſt him, for he that loveth the Love of God, loveth God himſelf: And wherefore art thou ſad for Want of that Love, but becauſe thou loveſt him in ſome Meaſure, and withall finds him beyond all that thou can think and love: But I ſay, that which moſt concerns thee, is, to love ſtill more, and that thou wouldſt be more earneſt to Love him, then to know that thou loves him.

Now I know no more effectual way to increaſe Love to Jeſus Chriſt, then to believe his Love. Chriſt Jeſus is the Author and Finiſher both of Faith and Love, and we love him, becauſe he firſt loved us. Therefore the right Diſcovery of Jeſus Chriſt, what he is, and what he hath done for Sinners, is that which will of all

Things

Things most prevail, to ingage the Soul unto him: But as long as ye suspend your Faith upon the Being or Encrease of your Love, and Obedience (as the manner of too many is:) You take even such a Course as he, that will not plant the Tree till he see the Fruits of it; which is contrary to common Sense and Reason.

Since this then is the Sum of true Religion, to believe in Christ, and to love him, and so live to him; we shall wind up all that is spoken, into that Exhortation of the Apostle's, *Hold fast the Form of sound Words which thou hast heard.* You have this Doctrine of Faith and Love delivered unto you, which may be able to save your Souls: Then, I beseech you, hold them fast, Salvation is in them; they are sound Words, and wholsome Words; Words of Life, Spirit and Life (as Christ speaks) as well as Words of Truth: But how will you hold them fast that have them not at all, that know them not though you hear them? You who are ignorant of the Gospel, and hear nothing but a Sound of Words, instead of sound and wholesome Words, How can you hold them fast? Can a Man hold the Wind in the Hollow of his Hand, or keep in a Sound within it? You know no more but a Sound, and a Wind that passeth by your Ear, without observing either Truth or Life in it. But then again, you who understand these sound Words, and have a Form of Knowledge, and of the Letter of the Law, what will that avail you? You cannot hold it fast, except you have it within you, and it is within you indeed when it is in your Heart, when the Form of it is engraven upon the very Soul in Love. Now, though you understand the Sound of these Words, and the Sound of Truth in them, yet you receive not the living Image of them, which is Faith and Love. Can you paint a Sound! Can you form it, or engrave it on any thing? Nay, but these sound Words are more substantial and solid; they must be engraven on the Heart, else you will never hold them; they may be easily plucked out of the Mouth, and Hand, by Temptation, unless they be enclosed, and laid up in the secret of the Heart, as *Mary* laid them. The Truth must hold thee fast, or thou canst not hold it fast; it must captivate thee, and bind thee with the Golden Chains of Affection, which only is true Freedom, or certainly thou wilt let it go. Nay, you must not only have the Truth received by Love into your Heart, but, as the Apostle speaks, you must also *hold fast the Form of sound Words.* Scripture-*Words* are *sound Words*; the Scripture's Method of teaching is sound and wholsome: There may be unsound Words used in expressing true Matter; and if a Man shall give Liberty to his own luxuriant Imagination, to expatiate in Notions, and Expressions, either to catch the Ear of the Vulgar, or to appear some new Discoverer of Light, and Gospel-mysteries, he may as readily fall into Error and Darkness, as into Truth and Light. Some Men do busk up old Truths, Scripture-truths, into some new Dress of Language, and Notions, and then give them out for new Discoveries, new Lights; but in so doing, they often hazard the losing of the Truth it self. We should beware and *take heed* of *strange* Words, that have the least Appearance of Evil, such as *Christed*, and *Godded*; let us think it enough, to be wise according to the Scriptures, and suspect all that, as vain, empty, unsound, that tends not to the Increase of Faith in Christ, and Love and Obedience unto him. As ordinarily the Dialect of those called *Antinomians* is. Giving,

and not granting, that they had no unſound Mind, yet I am ſure they uſe unſound Words to expreſs ſound Matter; the Cloaths ſhould be ſhaped to the Perſon: Truth is plain and ſimple, let Words of Truth alſo be full of Simplicity. I ſay no more, but leave that upon you, that you hold faſt even the very Words of the Scriptures, and be not bewitched by the vain Pretentions of *Spirit, all Spirit, pure, and ſpiritual Service,* and ſuch like, to the caſting off of the Word of Truth, as *Letter*, as *Fleſh*; and ſuch is the high Attainment of ſome in theſe Days, an high Attainment indeed, and a mighty Progreſs in the way to Deſtruction, the very laſt Diſcovery of that Antichriſt and Man of Sin. Oh, make much of the Scripture, for you ſhall neither read nor hear the like of it in the World: Other Books may have ſound Matter, but there is ſtill ſomething in Manner, or Words unſound; no Man can ſpeak to you Truth in ſuch Plainneſs, and Simplicity in ſuch Soundneſs alſo. But here is both ſound Matter, and ſound Words, the Truth holden out truly, Health and Salvation holden out in as wholſome a Manner as is poſſible. Matter and Manner are both Divine.

Exod. iii. 13. 14. *When they ſhall ſay unto me, What is his Name? What ſhall I ſay? And God ſaid,* I AM THAT I AM.

WE are now about this Queſtion, What God is? But, Who can anſwer it? Or, if anſwered, Who can underſtand it? It ſhould aſtoniſh us in the very Entry, to think that we are about to ſpeak, and to hear of his Majeſty, *whom Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entred into the Heart of any Creature to conſider what he is.* Think ye, that blind Men could have a pertinent Diſcourſe of Light and Colours? Would they form any ſuitable Notion of that they had never ſeen, and cannot be known but by ſeeing? What an ignorant Speech would a deaf Man make of Sound, which a Man cannot ſo much as know what it is, but by hearing of it? How then can we ſpeak of God, who dwells in ſuch inacceſſible Light, that, though we had our Eyes opened, yet they are far leſs proportioned to that reſplendent Brightneſs, than a blind Eye is to the Sun's Light?

It uſes to be a Queſtion, If there be a God? Or, How it may be known that there is a God? It were almoſt Blaſphemy to move ſuch a Queſtion, if there were not ſo much Atheiſm in the Hearts of Men, which makes us either to doubt, or not firmly to believe, and ſeriouſly to conſider it. But what may convince Souls of the Divine Majeſty? Truly, I think, if it be not evident by its own Brightneſs, all the Reaſon that can be brought, is but like a Candle's-light to ſee the Sun by. Yet, becauſe of our Weakneſs, the Lord ſhines upon us in the Creatures, as in a Glaſs; and this is become the beſt Way to take up the glorious Brightneſs of his Majeſty, by Reflection in his Word and Works. God himſelf dwells in Light inacceſſible, that no Man can approach unto; if any look ſtraight to that Sun of Righteouſneſs, he ſhall be aſtoniſhed and amazed, and ſee no more than in the very Darkneſs: But the beſt way to behold the Sun, is to look upon it in a Pail of Water; and the ſureſt way to know God by, is to take him up in a State

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of Humiliation and Condeſcenſion, as the Sun in the Rainbow, in his Word and Works, which are Mirrours of his Divine Power and Goodneſs, and do reflect upon the Hearts and Eyes of all Men the Beams of that increated Light: If this be not the Speech, that *Day uttereth unto Day, and Night unto Night,* One-ſelf Being gave me a Being; and if thou hear not that Language that is gone out into all the Earth, and be not, as it were, noiſed and poſſeſſed with all the Sounds of every Thing about thee, above thee, beneath thee, yea, and within thee, all ſinging a melodious Song to that excellent Name which is above all Names, and conſpiring to give Teſtimony to the Fountain of their Being; If this, I ſay, be not ſo ſenſible unto thee, as if a Tongue and a Voice were given to every Creature to expreſs it, then, indeed, we need not reaſon the Buſineſs with thee who haſt loſt thy Senſes; do but, I ſay, retire inwardly, and ask, in Sobriety and Sadneſs, What thy Conſcience thinks of it? And, undoubtedly, it ſhall confeſs a Divine Majeſty, at leaſt, tremble at the Apprehenſion of what it either will not confeſs, or ſlenderly believes: The very Evidence of Truth ſhall extort an Acknowledgment from it. If any Man denied the Divine Majeſty, I would ſeek no other Argument to perſwade him, than what was uſed to convince an old Philoſopher, who denied the Fire; They put his Hand in it till he found it; ſo, I ſay, return within to thy own Conſcience, and thou ſhalt find the ſcorching Heat of that Divine Majeſty, burning it up, whom thou wouldſt not confeſs. There is an inward feeling and Senſe of God that is imprinted in every Soul by Nature, that leaves no Man without ſuch a Teſtimony of God that makes him without Excuſe: There is no Man ſo impious, ſo atheiſtical, but whether he will or not, he ſhall feel at ſometimes that which he loves not to know or conſider of; ſo that what reſt ſecure Conſciences have from the Fear and Terrour of God, it is like the Sleep of a drunken Man, who even when he ſleeps does not reſt quietly.

Now, although this inward Stamp of a Deity be engraven on the Minds of all, and every Creature without have ſome Marks of his Glory ſtamped on them; ſo that all things a Man can behold above him, or about him, or beneath him, the moſt mean and inconſiderable Creatures are Pearls and Tranſparent-ſtones that caſts abroad the Rays of that glorious Brightneſs which ſhines on them; as if a Man were incloſed into a City builded all of precious Stones, that in the Sun-ſhine all and every Parcel of it, the Streets, the Houſes, the Roofs, the Windows, all of it, reflected into his Eyes thoſe Sun-beams in ſuch a Manner, as if all had been one Mirrour: Though, I ſay, this be ſo, yet ſuch is the Blockiſhneſs and Stupidity of Men, that they do not, for all this, conſider of the glorious Creator; ſo that all theſe Lamps ſeem to be lighted in vain, to ſhew forth his Glory; which though they do every Way diſplay their Beams upon us, that we can turn our Eye no where, but ſuch a Ray ſhall penetrate it, yet we either do not conſider it, or the Conſideration of it takes not ſuch deep Root as to lead Home to God; therefore the Scripture calls all natural Men Atheiſts, *They have ſaid in their Heart, There is no God,* Pſal. xiv. 1. All Men almoſt confeſs a God with their Mouth, and think they believe in him; but alas! Behold their Actions, and Hearts, what Teſtimony they give; for a Man's Walking and Converſation is like an Eye-witneſs, that one of them deſerves more Credit than ten Ear-witneſſes

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of Professions, *Plus valet oculatus testis unus, quam auriti decem.* Now, I may ask of you, What would ye do, how would ye walk, if ye believed there were no God? Would ye be more dissolute and prophane, and more void of Religion? Would not humane Laws bind you as much in that case as they now do? For that is almost all the Restraint that is upon many, the Fear of temporal Punishment, or Shame among Men; set your walking beside a Heathen's Conversation, and, save that you say ye believe in the true God, and he denies him, there is no Difference; your Transgressions speak louder than your Professions, *that there is no Fear of God before your Eyes*, Psal. xxxvi. 1. Your Practice belies your Profession, *you profess that you know God, but in Works you deny him*, saith *Paul*, Tit. i. 16. *Ore quod dicitis, opere negatis.* In these Words read in your Audience, you have a strange Question, and a strange Answer; a Question of *Moses*, and an Answer of God: The Occasion of it was the Lord's giving to *Moses* a strange and uncouth Message; he was giving him Commission to go and speak to a King to dismiss and let go 600000 of his Subjects; and to speak to a numerous Nation, to depart from their own Dwellings, and come out whither the Lord should lead them; Might not *Moses* then say within himself, Who am I, to speak such a Thing to a King? Who am I, to lead out such a mighty People? Who will believe that thou hast sent me? Will not all Men call me a Deceiver, an Enthusiastical Fellow, that takes upon me such a thing? Well then, saith *Moses* to the Lord; Lord, when I shall say, that the God of their Fathers sent me unto them, they will not believe me; they have now forgotten thy Majesty, and think that thou art but even like the Vanities of the Nations; they cannot know their own Portion from other Nations vain Idols; which they have given the same Name unto, and call Gods as well as thou art called: Now therefore, says he, when they ask me What thy proper Name is by which thou art distinguished from all Idols, and all the Works of thine own Hands, and of Men's Hands, what shall I say unto them? Here is the Question. But why asks thou my Name, saith the Lord to *Jacob? Gen.* xxxii. 29. Importing, that it is a high Presumption, and bold Curiosity, to search such a Wonder; Ask not my Name, saith the Angel to *Manoah*, for it is secret or wonderful, *Judges* xiii. 18. It's a Mystery, a hidden Mystery, not for Want of Light, but for too much Light; It's a Secret, it's wonderful; out of the Reach of all created Capacity, *Thou shalt call his Name Wonderful*, Isa. ix. 6. What Name can express that incomprehensible Majesty? The Mind is more comprehensive than Words, but the Mind and Soul is too narrow to conceive him; O then! How short a Garment must all Words, the most significant, and comprehensive, and superlative Words be? *Solomon's* Soul and Heart was enlarged as the Sand of the Sea, but O! It's not large enough for the Creator of it. *What is his Name, or, What is his Son's Name, if thou canst tell*, Prov. xxx. 4. The Lord himself expresses it to our Capacity, because we are not capable of what he can express, much less of what he is; If he should speak to us of himself as he is, O! It should be dark Sayings, hid from the Understandings of all living; we could reach no more of it, but that it is a Wonder, a Secret: Here is the highest Attainment of our Knowledge, to know there is some

Mystery

Myſtery in it, but not, What that Myſtery is; Chriſt hath a Name above all Names, How then can we know that Name? It was well ſaid by ſome of old, *Deus eſt πολύωνυμος*, and yet *ἀνώνυμος multorum nominum, & tamen nullius nominis*, he hath all Names, and yet he hath no Name: *Quia eſt omnia, & tamen nihil omnium*, becauſe he is all in all, and yet none of all; *Deus eſt quod vides, & quod non vides*; you may call him by all the Works of his Hands, for theſe are Beams of his increated Light, and Streams of his inexhauſtible Sea of Goodneſs; ſo that whatever Perfection is in them, all that is eminently, yea, infinitely in him; Therefore ſaith Chriſt, *There is one Good, even God*; and he calls himſelf the Light, and Life, and therefore you have ſo many Names of God in Scripture; there is no Quality, no Property, or Vertue, that hath the leaſt Shadow of Goodneſs, but he is that eſſentially, really, eternally, and principally; ſo that the Creature deſerves not ſuch Names, but as they participate of his Fullneſs; he is the true Light, the true Life; the Sun is not that true Light, though it give Light to the Moon, and to Men, for it borrows its Light and ſhining from him; all Creatures are, and ſhine but by Reflection; therefore theſe Names do agree to them but by a Metaphor, (ſo to ſpeak) the Propriety and Truth of them is in Him. As it is but a borrowed kind of Speech, to call a Picture, or Image, a Man, only becauſe of the Repreſentation and Likeneſs to him, it communicates in one Name with him: Even ſo (in ſome Manner) the Creatures are but ſome Shadows, Pictures, or Reſemblances, and equivocal Shapes of God; and whatever Name they have, of Good, Wiſe, Strong, Beautiful, True, or ſuch like, it's but borrowed Speech from God, whoſe Image they have; and yet poor vain Man would be wiſe, thought wiſe really, intrinſecally in himſelf, and properly, and calls himſelf ſo; which is as great an Abuſe of Language, as if the Picture ſhould call it ſelf a true and living Man. But then, as you may call him all Things, becauſe he is eminently and gloriouſly all that is in all, the Fountain and End of all, yet we muſt again deny that he is any of theſe Things, *unus omnia, & nihil omnium*; we can find no Name to him; or what can you call him, when you have ſaid, He is Light? You can form no other Notion of him but from the Reſemblance of this created Light; but alas! that he is not; he ſo infinitely tranſcends that, and is diſtant from it, as if he had never made it according to his Likeneſs: His Name is above all theſe Names; but what it is himſelf knows, and knows only: If ye ask what he is, we may glance at ſome Notions, and Expreſſions, to hold him out: In relation to the Creatures, we may call him Creator, Redeemer, Light, Life, Omnipotent, Good, Merciful, Juſt, and ſuch like: But if you ask, what is his proper Name in Relation to Himſelf, *ipſe novit*, Himſelf knows that, we muſt be ſilent, and Silence in ſuch a Subject is the rareſt Eloquence.

But let us hear what the Lord himſelf ſpeaks, in Anſwer to this Queſtion, if any can tell, ſure He himſelf knows his own Name beſt; *I am* (ſaith He) *what I am, ſum qui ſum*; go tell them that *I am* hath ſent thee: A ſtrange Anſwer, but an Anſwer only pertinent for ſuch a Queſtion: What ſhould *Moſes* make of this? What is he the wiſer of his asking? Indeed he might be the wiſer, it might teach him more by Silence, then all humane Eloquence could inſtruct him by ſpeaking: His Queſtion was curious, and behold an

Answer short and dark, to confound vain and presumptuous Mortality. *I am what I am*, an Answer that does not satisfie Curiosity, for it leaves Room for the first Question, *and what art thou?* But abundant to silence Faith and Sobriety, that it shall ask no more, but sit down and wonder.

There are three Things I conceive imported in this Name, God's *Unsearchableness*, God's *Unchangeableness*, and God's *Absoluteness*. His *Ineffability*, His *Eternity*, and His *Sovereignty* and *independent Subsistence*, upon whom all other Things depend.

I say, 1. His Unsearchableness: You know it is our Manner of Speech when we we would cover any thing from any, and not answer any thing distinctly to them, we say, it is what it is. I have said what I have said, I will not make you wise of it. Here then is the fittest Notion you can take up God into, to find him unsearchable beyond all Understanding, beyond all speaking; the more ye speak or think, to find him always beyond what ye speak or think; what ever you discover of him, to conceive, that Infiniteness is byond that, *ad finem cujus pertransiri non potest*, the End of which you cannot reach, that he is an unmeasurable Depth, a boundless Ocean of Perfection, that you can neither sound the Bottom of it, nor find the Breadth of it? Can a Child wade the Sea, or take it up in the Hollow of its Hand? When ever any thing of God is seen, he is seen a Wonder, *Wonderful* is the Name he is known by: All our Knowledge reacheth no farther than Admiration, *Who is like unto thee*, Exod. xv. 11. Psal. lxxxix. 6, 7. and Admiration speaks Ignorance. The greatest Attainment of Knowledge reacheth but such a Question as this, *Who is like to thee?* To know only that he is not like any other thing that we know, but not to know what he is: And the different Degrees of Knowledge is but in more Admiration or less, at his Unconceiveableness, and in more or less Affection expressed in such pathetick Interrogations, *O who is like the Lord?* How excellent is his Name? Here is the greatest Degree of Saints Knowledge here-away, to ask with Admiration and Affection such a Question, that no Answer can be given to, or none that we can conceive or understand, so as to satisfie wondring, but such as still more increaseth it. There is no other Subject, but you may exceed it in Apprehensions, and in Expressions: O how often are Mens Songs, and Thoughts, and Discourses above the Matter? But here is a Subject that there is no Excess into, nay, there is no Access unto it, let be Excess in it: Imagination that can transcend the created Heavens and Earth, and fancy to it self Millions of new Worlds, every one exceeding another, and all of them exceeding this in Perfection, yet it can do nothing here; that which at one Instant can pass from the one End of Heaven to the other, walk about the Circumference of the Heavens, and travel over the Breadth of the Sea, yet it can do nothing here, *Canst thou by searching find out God?* Job xi. Imagination cannot travel in these Bounds, for his Center is *every where*, and his Circumference *no where*, as an old Philosopher speaks of God, *Deus est, cujus Centrum est ubique, Circumferentia nusquam*, how shall it then find him out? There is nothing sure here but to lose our selves in a Mystery, and to follow his Majesty till we be swallowed up with an Oh *altitudo!* O the Depth, and Height, and Length, and Breadth of God! O the Depth of his Wisdom! O the Heighth of his Power! O the Breadth of his Love!

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And O the Length of his Eternity! 'Tis not Reason and Disputation, saith *Bernard*, will comprehend these, but Holiness; and that by stretching out the Arms of Fear and Love, Reverence and Affection. What more dreadful, than Power that cannot be resisted, and Wisdom that none can be hid from; and what more lovely than the Love wherewith he hath so loved us, and his Unchangeableness which admits of Suspicion? O fear him who hath a Hand that doth all, and an Eye that beholds all Things, and love him who hath so loved us, and cannot change. God hath been the Subject of the Discourses and Debates of Men in all Ages, but Oh, *Quam longe est in rebus qui est tam communis in vocibus?* How little a Portion hath Men understood of him? How hath he been hid from the Eyes of all living. Every Age must give this Testimony of him, *we have heard of his Fame*, but *he is hid from the Eyes of all living*. I think, that Philosopher that took it to his Advisement, said more in Silence than all Men have done in speaking. *Simonides* being asked by *Hiero* a King, what God was? Asked a Day to deliberate in, and think upon it; when the King sought an Account of his Meditation about it, he desired yet two Days more, and so as oft as as the King asked him, he still doubled the Number of the Days in which he might advise upon it. The King Wondring at this, asked what he meant by those Delays: Saith he, *Quanto magis considero, tanto magis obscurior mihi videtur*, the more I think on him, he is the more dark and unknown to me? This was more reall Knowledge than the many subtile Disputations of those Men, who by their poor Shell of finite Capacity, and Reason, presume to empty the Ocean of God's Infiniteness, by finding out Answers to all the Objections of carnal Reason, against all those Mysteries and Riddles of the Deity; I profess, I know nothing can satisfy Reason in this Business, but to lead it captive to the Obedience of Faith, and to silence it with the Faith of a Mystery which we know not. *Paul*'s Answer is one for all, and better than all the Syllogisms of such Men, *What art thou, O Man, who disputest?* Dispute thou: I will believe. *Ut intelligatur, tacendum est*, Silence only can get some Account of God; quiet and humble Ignorance in the Admiration of such a Majesty, is the profoundest Knowledge. *Non est mirum si ignoretur, majoris esset admirationis si sciatur*. It is no Wonder that God is not known, all the Wonder were to know and comprehend such a Wonder, such a Mystery? It is a a Wonder indeed, that he is not more known, but when I say so, I mean that he is not more wondred at, because he is passing Knowledge. If our Eyes of Flesh cannot see any thing almost when they look strait and stedfastly upon the Sun, O what can the Eye of the Soul behold, when it is fixed upon the Consideration of that shining and glorious Majesty? Will not that very Light be as Darkness to it, that it shall be as it were darkned, and dazled with a thick Mist of Light, *in superlucente caligine*, confounded with that resplendent Darkness. 'Tis said that the *Lord covers Himself with Light as with a Garment*, and yet *Clouds and Darkness are about Him, and he makes Darkness his Covering*, Psalm. xviii. 9, 10, 12. His inaccessible Light is this glorious Darkness, that strikes the Eyes of Men blind; as in the Darkness, the Sun's Light is the Night-owle's Night and Darkness, when a Soul can find no better Way to know him by, then by these Names and Notions by which we deny and put out Know-

ledge, when it conceived all of him it can, then, as being over come with that dazling Brightness of his Glory, to think him inconceivable, and to express him in such Terms as withall expresses our Ignorance: There is no Name agrees more to God, than that which saith, we cannot name him, we cannot know him, such as, *invisible*, *incomprehensible*, *infinite*, &c. This *Socrates*, an Heathen, profest to be all his Knowledge, that he knew he did know nothing, and therefore he preached an unknown God to the *Athenians*, to whom after they erected an Altar with that Inscription, *To the unknown God.* I confess, indeed, the most Part of our Discourses, of our Performances, have such a writing on them, *To the unknown God*, because we think we know him, and so we know nothing; But O that Christians had so much Knowledge of God, so much true Wisdom, as solidly, and willingly to confess in our Souls our own Ignorance of him, and then I would desire no other Knowledge, and growing in the Grace of God, but to grow more and more in the Believin Ignorance of such a Mystery, in the Knowledge of an unknown, unconceivable, and unsearchable God, that in all the Degrees of Knowledge we might still conceive we had found less, and that there is more to be found than before we apprehended. This is the most perfect Knowledge of God, that doth not drive away Darkness, but encrease it in the Soul's Apprehension; any Encrease in it doth not declare what God is, or satisfie one's Admiration in it, but rather shews him to be more invisible and unsearchable; so that the Darkness of a Soul's Ignorance is more manifested by this Light, and not more covered, and one's own Knowledge is rather darkned, and disappears in the glorious Appearance of this Light; for in all new Discoveries, there is no other thing appears: But that this which the Soul is seeking is supereminently unknown, and still further from Knowledge than ever it conceived it to be. Therefore whatever you conceive or see of God, if ye think ye know what ye conceive and see, it's not God ye see, but something of God's, less than God: For it's said, *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive, what he hath laid up for them that love Him:* Now, certainly, that's Himself he hath laid up for them; therefore whatever thou conceives of him, and thinks now thou knows him, that is not He; for he hath not entred into Man's Heart to conceive Him. Therefore this must be thy Soul's Exercise and Progress in it, to remove all things, all Conceptions from him, as not beseeming his Majesty, and to go still forward in such a dark negative Discovery, till thou know not where to seek him, nor find him. *Si quis Deum videat & intelligat quod vidit, Deum non vidit*, If any see God, and understand what they see, God they do not see; for, *God hath no Man seen*, 1 John iv. 12. *And no Man knows the Father but the Son*, and none knows the Son but the Father; it's his own Property, to know Himself, as *to be Himself*; silent and seeing Ignorance, is our safest and highest Knowledge.

Exod.

Exod. iii. 14. *I AM THAT I AM.* Pſal. xc. 2. *Before the Mountains,* &c. *from everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.* Job. xi. 7, 8, 9. *Canſt thou by ſearching find out God,* &c.

THIS is the chief Point of ſaving Knowledge, to know God: And this is the firſt Point or Degree of the true Knowledge of God, to diſcern how ignorant we are of him, and find him beyond all Knowledge: The Lord gives a Definition of Himſelf, but ſuch a one as is no more clear than Himſelf to our Capacities; A ſhort one indeed, and you may think it ſays not much, *I am.* What is it that may not ſay ſo, *I am that I am?* The leaſt and moſt inconſiderable Creature hath its own Being; Man's Wiſdom would have learned him to call Himſelf by ſome high Stiles, as the Manner and Cuſtom of Kings and Princes is, and ſuch as the Flattery of Men attributes unto them; you would think the Superlatives of wiſe, good, ſtrong, excellent, glorious, and ſuch like, were more beſeeming his Majeſty; and yet there is more Majeſty in the ſimple Stile than in all others; but a natural Man cannot behold it, for it is ſpiritually diſcerned. *Let the potſheards of the Earth* (ſaith he) *ſtrive with the potſheards of the Earth,* Iſa. xlv. 9. *But let them not ſtrive with their Maker.* So I ſay, let Creatures compare with Creatures; let them take ſuperlative Stiles, in regard of others; let ſome of them be called good, and ſome better, in the Compariſon among themſelves, but God muſt not enter in the Compariſon. *Paul* thinks it an odious Compariſon, to compare preſent Croſſes to eternal Glory, *I think them not worthy to be compared,* ſaith *Paul, Rom.* viii. But how much more odious is it, to compare God with Creatures. Call Him Higheſt, call Him moſt Powerful, call Him moſt Excellent, Almighty, moſt Glorious in reſpect of Creatures, you do but abaſe his Majeſty, to bring it down to any Terms of Compariſon with them, which is beyond all the Bounds of Underſtanding; all theſe do but expreſs Him to be in ſome Degree eminently ſeated above the Creatures, as ſome Creatures are above all others, ſo you do no more but make Him the Head of all, as ſome one Creature is the Head of one Line or Kind under it; but what is that to his Majeſty? He ſpeaks otherwiſe of Himſelf, *Iſa.* xl. 17. *All Nations are before Him as nothing, and they are accounted to Him leſs than nothing.* Then, certainly, you have not taken up the true Notion of God, when you have conceived him the moſt eminent of all Beings, as long as any Being appears as a Being in his Sight, before whom all Beings conjoyned are as nothing; while you conceive God to be the beſt, you ſtill attribute ſomething to the Creature, for all Comparatives include the Poſitive in both Extreams: So then, you take up only ſome different Degrees between them who differ ſo infinitely, ſo incomprehenſibly; the Diſtance betwixt Heaven and Earth is but a poor Similitude, to expreſs the Diſtance between God and Creatures; What is the Diſtance betwixt a Being and nothing? Can you meaſure it? Can

you imagine it? Suppose you take the most high, and the most low, and measure the Distance betwixt them, you do but consider the Difference betwixt two Beings, but you do not express how far Nothing is distant from any of them: Now, if any Thing could be imagined less than nothing, could you at all guess at the vast Distance between it and a Being? Now so it is here; thus saith the Lord, all Nations, their Glory, Perfection, and Number, all of them, and all their Excellencies united, do not amount to the Value of an Unity, in regard of my Majesty; all of them like Cyphers, joyn never so many of them together, they can never make up a Number, they are nothing in this regard, *and less than nothing*. So then, we ought thus to conceive of God, and thus to attribute a Being and Life to him, as in his Sight, and in the Consideration of it, all created Beings might evanish out of our Sight; as the glorious Light of the Sun, though it do not annihilate the Stars, and make them nothing, yet it annihilates their Appearance to our Senses, and makes them disappear, as if they were not; although there be a great Difference and Inequality of the Stars in the Night, some lighter, some darker, some of the first Magnitude, and some of the second and third, &c. some of greater Glory, and some of less: But in the Day-time all are alike, all are darkned by the Sun's Glory: Even so it is here, though we may compare one Creature with another, and find different Degrees of Perfection and Excellency, while we are only comparing them among themselves; but let once the glorious Brightness of God shine upon the Soul, and in that Light all these Lights shall be obscured, all their Differences unobserved; an Angel and a Man, a Man and a Worm, differ much in Glory and Perfection of Being; but O in his Presence there is no such reckoning, upon this account all Things are alike, God infinitely distant from all, and so not more or less: Infiniteness is not capable of such Terms of Comparison. This is the Reason why Christ says, *There is none good, but one, even God.* Why, because, in respect of his Goodness, nothing deserves that Name; lesser Light in the View of the greater is a Darkness, as less Good in Comparison of a greater, appears Evil: How much more then shall created Light and created Goodness lose that Name and Notion, in the Presence of that uncreated Light, and Self-sufficient Goodness? And therefore it is, that the Lord calls Himself after this Manner, *I am*, as if nothing else were. I will not say, saith he, that I am the Highest, the best and most Glorious that is; that supposeth other Things to have some Being, and some Glory that is worthy the accounting of; *But I am, and there is none else, I am alone, I lift up my Hand to Heaven, and swear, I live for ever.* There is nothing else can say, I am, I live, and there is none else; for there is nothing hath it of it self: Can any boast of that which they have borrowed, and is not their own? As, if the Bird that had stollen from other Birds its fair Feathers, should come forth and contend with them about Beauty, would not they presently every one pluck out their own, and leave her naked, to be an Object of Mockery to all? Even so, since our *Breath and Being is in our Nostrils*, and that depends upon his Majesty's breathing upon us, if he should but keep in his Breath, as it were, we should vanish into nothing, He *looketh upon Man and he is not*, Job vii. 8. That is a strange Look, that looks Man not only out of Countenance, but out of Life and Being, He looks him into his first nothing; and then can he say, I live, I am; no, he must

must always say of himself in respect of God, as *Paul* of himself in respect of Christ, *I live, yet not I, but Christ in me*; I am, yet not I, but God in me: I live, I am, yet not I, but in God, in whom *I live, and have my Being*. So that there is no other thing beside God can say, *I am*; because all things are but borrowed Drops of this self-sufficient Fountain, and Sparkles of this primitive Light; let any thing intervene between the Stream and the Fountain, and it is cut off and dryed up; let any thing be interposed between the Sun and the Beam, and it evanishes. Therefore this Fountain-being, this original Light, this Self-being αὐτὸ ὄν, as *Plato* called him, deserves only the Name of Being; other Things that we call after that Name are nearer nothing than God, and so, in regard of his Majesty, may more fitly be called nothing than something. You see then how profound a Mystery of God's absolute self-sufficient Perfection is infolded in these three Letters, *I am*, or in these four (JEHOVAH.) If you ask what is God? There is nothing occurrs better than this, *I am*, or *he that is*: If I should say He is the Almighty, the only Wise, the most Perfect, the most Glorious, it is all contained in that Word, *I am that I am, nempe hoc est ei esse, hæc omnia esse*; For that is to *be* indeed, to be all those Perfections simply, absolutely, and as it were solely; if I say all that, and should reckon out all the Scripture-Epithets, I add nothing; if I say no more, I diminish nothing.

As this holds out God's absolute Perfection, so we told you that it imports his Eternity and his Unchangeableness. You know *Pilate's* Speech, *what I have written I have written*, wherein he meant, that he would not change it, it should stand so. So this properly belongs to God's Eternity, *Before the Mountains were brought forth, from Everlasting to Everlasting he is God*, Psal. xc. 2. Now this is properly to *be*, and this only deserves the Name of Being, which never was nothing, and never shall be nothing, which may always say, *I am*; you know it is so with nothing else but God; the Heavens and Earth, with the Things therein, could not not say 6000 Years ago, *I am*. *Adam* could once have said, I am, but now he cannot say it; for that Self-being and Fountain-being hath said to him, *Return to Dust*; and so it is with all the Generations past, where are they now? They were, but they are not: And we then were not, and now are; for we are come in their Place, but within a little Time, who of us can say, I am? No, *we flee away and are like a Dream, as when one awaketh*: We *are like a Tale that is told*, that makes a present Noise, and it is past; within few Years this Generation will pass, and none will make Mention of us, *our Place will not know us*, no more than we do now remember those who have been before: Christ said of *John*, *He was a burning and shining Light*, he was, saith he, but now he is not: But Christ may always say, *I am the Light and Life of Men*. Man is, but look a little backward, and he was not; you shall find his Original; and step a little forward and he shall not be, you shall find his End: But God is *Alpha* and *Omega, the Beginning and the End*. But Oh, who can retire so far backward as to apprehend a Beginning, or go such a start forward as to conceive an End in such a Being as is the Beginning and End of all Things; but without all Beginning and End? Whose Understanding would it not confound? There is no Way here but to flee into *Paul's* Sanctuary, *O the Heighth and*

Breadth

Breadth, and Length and Depth! We cannot imagine a Being, but we must first conceive it nothing, and in some instant receiving its Being; and, therefore *canst thou by Searching find out God?* Therefore what his Being is, hath not entred into the Heart of Man to consider. If any Man would live out the Space but of two Generations, he would be a World's Wonder; but if any had their Days prolonged as the Patriarchs before the Flood, they would be called ancient indeed, but then the Heavens and Earth are far more Ancient; we may go backward the Space of near 6000 Years in our own Minds, and yet be as far from his Beginning as we were; when we are come to the Beginning of all Things, a Man's Imagination may yet extend it self further, and suppose to it self as many Thousands of Years before the Beginning of Time, as all the Angels and Men of all Nations, and Generations from the Beginning, if they had been imployed in no other thing but this, could have summed up; and then suppose a Product to be made of all the several Sums of Years, it would be vast and unspeakable, but yet your Imagination could reach further, and multiply that great Sum as often into it self as there are Unites in it: Now when you have done all this, you are never a whit nearer the Days of *the Ancient of Days*. Suppose then this should be the only Exercise of Men and Angels throughout all Eternity, all this marvellous Arithmetick would not amount unto the least Shadow of the Continuance of Him who *is from Everlasting*; all that huge Product of all the Multiplications of Men and Angels, hath no Proportion unto that never Beginning, and never ending Duration: The greatest Sum that is imaginable hath a certain Proportion to the least Number, that it containeth it so oft and no oftner, so that the least Number being multiplyed will amount unto the greatest that you can conceive. But O, where shall a Soul find it self here? It is inclosed between Infiniteness before, and Infiniteness behind, between two Everlastings, which way soever it turns, there is no out going; which way soever it looks, it must lose it self in an Infiniteness round about it, it can find no Beginning and no End, when it hath wearied it self in searching, which if it find not, it knows not what it is, and cannot tell what it is. Now what are we then? O what are we, who so magnifie our selves? *We are but of yesterday, and know nothing*, Job viii. 9. Suppose that we had endured the Space of 1000 Years, yet saith *Moses*, Psal. xc. 4. *A thousand Years are but as yesterday in thy Sight*; Time hath no Succession to thee, thou beholdest at once what is not at once, but in several Times, all that hath not the Proportion of one Day to thy Days: We change in our Days, and are not that to-day we were yesterday, but *He is the same Yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*, Heb. xiii. 8. Every Day we are dying, some Part of our Life is taken away; we leave still one Day more behind us, and what is behind us is gone and cannot be recovered: Though we vainly please our selves in the Number of our Years, and the Extent of our Life, and the Vicissitudes of Time, yet the Truth is, we are but still losing so much of our Being and Time, as passeth: First, we lost our Child-hood, then we lose our Manhood, and then we leave our old Age behind us also, and there is no more before us, even the very present Day we divide it with Death: But when he moves all Things, he remains immoveable; though Days and Years be in a continual Flux and Motion about him,

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and they carry us down with their Force, yet *He abides the same for ever*; even the Earth that is established so sure, and the Heavens that are supposed to be incorruptible, yet *they wax old as doth a Garment*, but *He is the same, and his Years have no End*, Psal. cii. 26, 27. *Sine principio principium, absque fine finis, cui præteritum non abit, haud adit futurum, ante omnia, post omnia, totus, unus ipse.* He is the Beginning without any Beginning, the End without an End, there is nothing by-past to him, and nothing to come, *sed uno mentis cernit in ictu, quæ sunt, quæ erunt, quæ fuerantque,* He is one that is all, before all, after all, and in all; He beholds out of the exalted and supereminent Tower of Eternity, all the Successions and Changes of the Creatures, and there is no Succession, no Mutation in his Knowledge, as in ours, *Known to him are all his Works, from the Beginning.* He can declare the End before the Beginning, for he knows the End of all Things, before he gives them Beginning: Therefore he is never driven to any Consultation upon any Emergent, or Incident, as the wisest of Men are, who could not foresee all Accidents and Events, but *He is in one mind*, saith *Job*, and that one Mind and one Purpose is one for all, one concerning all; He had it from everlasting, and *who can turn him?* For *He will accomplish what his Soul desires.*

Now, canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou a poor mortal Creature, either ascend up unto the Heighth of Heaven, or descend down into the Depths of Hell? Canst thou travell abroad, and compass all the Sea and dry Land, by its Longitude and Latitude? Would any mortal Creature undertake such a Voyage, to compass the Universe? Nay, not only so, but to search into every Corner of it, above and below, on the right Hand, and on the left; No certainly, unless we suppose a Man whose Head reaches unto the Heighth of Heaven, and whose Feet is down in the Depths of Hell, and whose Arms, stretched out, can fathom the Length of the Earth, and Breadth of the Sea, unless, I say, we suppose such a Creature, then it is in vain to imagine, that either the Heighth of the one or the Depth of the other, the Length of the one, and the Breadth of the other, can be found out and measured: Now if mortal Creatures cannot attain the Measure of that which is finite, O then, what can a Creature do, what can a Creature know of him that is Infinite, and the Maker of all these Things; you cannot compass the Sea and Land, how then can a Soul comprehend him, *who hath measured the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand, and comprehended the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, and the Mountains he weighs in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance,* Isa. xl. 12. Thou cannot measure the Circumference of the Heaven, how then canst thou find out him, *who meteth out the Heavens with his Span, and stretcheth them out as a Curtain?* Isa. xl. 12, 22. You cannot number the Nations, or perceive the Magnitude of the Earth, and the huge Extent of the Heavens, what then canst thou know of him, *who sitteth on the Circle of the Earth, and the Inhabitants are but as Grass-hoppers before him,* and he spreadeth out the Heavens as a Tent to dwell into? He made all the Pins and Stakes of this Tabernacle, and he fastned them below, but upon nothing, and stretches this Curtain about them, and above them; and it was not so much Difficulty to him, as to you to draw the Curtain about your Bed, for *he spake, and*

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it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast. Canst thou by searching find him out? And yet thou must search him, not so much out of Curiosity to know what he is, for *he dwells in inaccessible Light, which no Man hath seen, and no Man can see,* 1 Tim. vi. 16. Not so much to find him, as to be found of him, or to find what we cannot know when we have found; *Hic est qui nunquam quæri frustra potest, cum tamen inveniri non potest*; you may seek him, but though you never find him, yet ye shall not seek him in vain, for ye shall find Blessedness in him: Though you find him, yet can you search him out unto Perfection? Then what you have found were not God? How is it possible for such narrow Hearts to frame an Apprehension, or receive an Impression of such an immense Greatness, and eternal Goodness? Will not a Soul lose its Power of thinking, and speaking, because there is so much to be thought and spoken; and it so transcends all that it can think or speak? Silence then must be the best Rhetorick; and the sweetest Eloquence, when Eloquence it self must become dumb and silent; it is the Abundance and Excess of that inaccessible Light, that hath no Proportion to our Understandings, that strikes us as blind as in the Darkness the want of Light: All that we can say of God is, that whatsoever we can think or conceive, he is not that, because he hath not entred into the Heart of Man to conceive, and that he is not like any of these Things which we know, unto which if he be not like, we cannot frame any Similitude or Likeness of Him in our Knowledge? What shall we then do? Seek Him, and search Him indeed; but, if we cannot know Him, to reverence and fear and adore what we know: So much of Him may be known, as may teach us our Duty, and shew unto us our Blessedness; let then all our Inquiries of Him have a special Relation to this End, that we may out of Love and Fear of such a glorious and good God, worship and serve Him, and compose our selves according to his Will, and wholly to his Pleasure: What ever thou knows of God, or searches of Him, it is but a vain Speculation, and a Work of Curiosity, if it do not lead to this End, to frame and fashion thy Soul to an Union and Communion with Him in Love; if it do not discover thy self unto thy self, that in that Light of God's glorious Majesty thou may distinctly behold thy own Vileness, and wretched Misery, thy Darkness, and Deadness, and utter Impotency. The Angels that *Isaiah* saw attending God in the Temple, had Wings covering their Faces, and Wings covering their Feet: Those excellent Spirits who must cover their Feet from us, because we cannot behold their Glory, as *Moses* behooved to be vailed; yet they cannot behold his Glory, but must cover their Face from the radiant and shining Brightness of his Majesty, yet they have other two Wings to flee with; and being thus composed in Reverence and Fear to God, they are ready to execute his Commands willingly and swiftly, *Isa.* vi. 1, 2, 3, &c. But what is the Use *Isaiah* makes of all this glorious Sight? *Wo is me, I am a Man of polluted Lips,* &c. *Oh, all is unclean, People,* and *Pastor*: He had known, doubtless, something of it before, but now he sees it of new, as if he had never seen it: The Glory of God shining on him, doth not puff him up in Arrogancy and Conceit of the Knowledge of such profound Mysteries, but he is more abased in himself by it, it shines into his Heart, and whole Man, and lets him see all unclean within and without; and so it was with *Job, Job*

xlii. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear*, but as long as it was Hearsay, I thought my self something; I often reflected upon my self and Actions, with a kind of Self-complacency and Delight: But now, saith he, since *I have seen thee by the seeing of the Eye, I abhor my self in Dust and Ashes*, I cannot look upon my self with Patience, without Abhorrency and Detestation; Self-love made me loath other Mens Sins more than mine own, and Self-love did cover mine own Sins from me, it presented me to my self in a feigned Likeness, but now I see my self in my true Shape, and all Coverings stripped off. Thy Light hath pierced into my Soul, and behold, I cannot endure to look upon my self: Here now is the true Knowledge of God's Majesty, which discovers within thee a Mystery of Iniquity; and here is the Knowle dge of God indeed, which abases all Things beside God, not only in Opinion, but in Affection, that attracts and unites thy Soul to God, and draws it from thy self and all created Things: This is a right Discovery of Divine Purity and Glory, that spots even the Cleanness of Angels, and stains the Pride of all Glory, much more will it represent Filthiness, as Filthiness, without a Covering. It's Knowledge and Science (falsly so called) that puffeth up, for true Knowledge emptieth a Soul of it self, and humbleth a Soul in it self, that it may be full of God. He that thinks he knows any thing, he knows nothing as he ought to know.

This then is the first Property or Mark of the saving Knowledge of God, it removes all Grounds of vain Confidence, that a Soul cannot trust unto itself; and then the very proper Intent of it is, that a Soul may trust in God, and depend on him in all Things: For this Purpose the Lord hath called himself by so many Names in Scripture, answerable to our several Necessities, and Difficulties, that he might make known to us how All-sufficient he is, that so we may turn our Eyes and Hearts towards him: This was the Intent of this Name, *I am*, that *Moses* might have a Support of his Faith; for if he had looked to outward Appearance, was it not almost a ridiculous Thing, and like a vain Fancy, for a poor inconsiderable Man to go to a King with such a Message, that he would dismiss so many Subjects? And was it not an Attempt of some mad Man to go about to lead so many Thousands from a wicked tyrannical King, into another Nation? Well, saith the Lord, *I am*; *I*, who give all things a Being, will give a Being to my Promise; I will make *Pharaoh* hearken, and the People obey. Well then, what is it that this Name of God will not answer? It is a creating Name, a Name that can bring all Things out of nothing by a Word; if he be such as he is, then he can make of us what he pleases. If our Souls had this Name constantly engraven on our Hearts, O what Power would Divine Promises and Threatnings have with us? *I, even I, am he that comforteth thee*, saith he: If we believed that it were He indeed, the Lord *Jehovah*, how would we be comforted? How would we praise Him by His Name JAH? How would we stoop unto Him, and submit unto His blessed Will? If we believed this, would we not be as dependent on Him as if we had no Being in our selves? Would we not make Him our Habitation and Dwelling-place? And conclude our own Stability, and the Stability of his Church from his unvariable Eternity, as the *Psalmist*, Psal. xcix. 1, and *Psal.* cii. *ult.* How can we think of such a Fountain-being, but we must withall acknowledge our selves to be Shadows of

his Goodneſs, and that we owe to Him what we are, and ſo conſecrate and dedicate our ſelves to his Glory? How can we conſider ſuch a Self-being, independent, and creating Goodneſs, but we muſt have ſome Deſire to cleave to him, and ſome Confidence to truſt in Him? Now, This is to know Him. When we think on his Unchangeableneſs, let us conſider our own Vanity, whoſe Glory and Perfection is like a Summer Flower, or like a Vapour aſcending for a little Time, whoſe beſt Eſtate is altogether Vanity: Our Purpoſes are ſoon broken off, and made of none Effect; our Reſolutions change. This is a Character of Mortality, we are not always alike, *Non ſibi conſtare, nec ubique & ſemper ſibi parem eundemque eſſe.* To be now one Thing, and then another Thing, is a Property of ſinful and wretched Man; therefore let us *ceaſe from Man whoſe Breath is in his Noſtrils*, and not truſt in Princes who ſhall die, far leſs in our ſelves who are leſs than the leaſt of Men: But let us put our Truſt in God, who changes not, and we ſhall not be conſumed; our Waters ſhall not fail, we ſhall never be aſhamed of any Hope we have in him. There is nothing elſe you truſt in, but, undoubtedly, it ſhall prove your Shame and Confuſion in Sum; whatever you hear or know of God, know that it is vain and empty, unleſs it deſcend down into the Heart to faſhion it to his Fear and Love, and extend unto the outward Man to conform it to Obedience; *you are but vain in your Imaginations, and your fooliſh Hearts are darkned*, while *when you know God, you glorifie Him not as God*; if that be not the Fruit and End of Knowledge, that Knowledge ſhall be worſe to thee than Ignorance, for both it brings on judicial Hardning here, and will be thy ſolemn Accuſer and Witneſs againſt thee hereafter, *Rom.* i. 21, 24. The Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, truly ſo called, is neither barren nor unfruitful, for out of its Root and Sap ſprings out Humility, Self-abaſing, Confidence in God, Patience in Tribulations, Meekneſs in Provocations, Temperance and Sobriety in lawful Things, &c. 2 *Pet.* i. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Exod. xxiv. 5,6,7, 8. *The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious*,&c.

THere is nothing can ſeparate between God and a People but Iniquity, and yet he is very loath to ſeparate even for that; he makes many Shews of departing, that ſo we may hold him faſt; and indeed he is not difficult to be holden. He threatens often to remove his Preſence from a Perſon, or Nation; and he threatens, that he may not indeed remove, but that they may entreat him to ſtay, and he is not hard to be entreated: Who is a God like unto him, ſlow to Anger, and of great Mercy? He is long of being provoked, and not long provoked; for it is like the Anger of a Parent's Love: Love takes on Anger, as the laſt Remedy, and if it prevail, it is as glad to put it off, as it was unwilling to take it on. You may ſee a lively Picture of this in God's dealing with *Moſes* and this People in the preceeding Chapter. He had long endured this rebellious and obſtinate People, had often threatned to cut them off, and yet, as it were, loath to do it, and repenting of it, he ſuffers himſelf to be entreated for them; but all in vain to them, they corrupted their Way ſtill more: And in the xxxii. *Chap.*

Chap. falls in groſs Idolatry, the great Treſpaſs that he had given them ſo ſolemn warning of often, whereupon great Wrath is conceived. And the Lord, *Chap.* xxxiii. 2. threatens to depart from them; Go your Way, ſaith he to *Canaan*, but I will not go with you; take your Venture of any Judgments, and the People of the Land's Cruelty: Here is a ſad Farewell to *Iſrael*, and who would think he could be detained after all that? Who would think that he could be entreated? And yet he is not entreated, he is not requeſted before he gives ſome Ground of it, and before he firſt condeſcends; go, ſaith he, and *put off thy Ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.* Will he then accept a repenting People, and is there yet Hope of Mercy? Should he that is going away ſhew us the Way to keep him ſtill? And he that flees from us, will he ſtrengthen us to purſue and follow after him? This is not after the Manner of Men, it is true, whoſe Compaſſions fail, when their Paſſion ariſeth, but this is the Manner and Method of Grace; or of him who waits to be gracious: He flees ſo as he would have a Follower; yea, while he ſeems to go away, he draws the Soul that it may run after him; hence is that Word, *Pſal.* lxiii. 8. *My Soul follows hard after thee; thy right Hand upholds me.* Well, the People mourns and puts off their Ornaments in Sign of Humiliation and Abaſement, but all this doth not pacify and quench the Flame that was kindled: *Moſes* takes the Tabernacle out of the Camp, the Place of Judgment where God ſpake with the People; and the Cloud, the Sign of God's Preſence, removes: In a Word, the Signs of God's loving and kind Preſence depart from them, to ſignify, that they were divorced from God, and, in a Manner, the Lord by *Moſes* excommunicates all the People, and Rulers both, and draws away theſe Holy Things from the Contagion of a prophane People: But yet all is not gone; he goes far off, but not out of Sight, that you may always follow Him, and if you follow, He will ſtand ſtill; He is never without the Reach of crying, though we do not perceive Him. Now, in this ſad Caſe you may have a Trial who is Godly: Every one that ſeeks the Lord will ſeparate from the unholy Congregation, and follow the Tabernacle; and this affects the whole People much, that they all worſhip in the Tent-doors. Now, in the mean Time God admits *Moſes* to ſpeak with Him; though He will not ſpeak to the People, yet He will ſpeak with their Mediator, a typical Mediator, to ſhew us that God is well pleaſed in Chriſt; and ſo all Chriſt's Interceſſions and Requeſts for us will get a Hearing; when they are come once in talking, the Buſineſs is taken up, for He is not ſoon angry, and never implacably angry, ſlow to Anger, and keeps it not long: *Moſes* falling familiar with God, not only obtains his Requeſt for the People, but becomes more bold in a Requeſt for his own Satisfaction and Confirmation: He could not endure to lead that People, except God went with him; and having the Promiſe of his going with them, he cannot endure Diſtance with him, but aſpires to the neareſt Communion that may be: Oh, that it were ſo with us. His great Requeſt is, That the Lord would ſhew him his Glory; had he not ſeen much of this already? And more than any Man ever ſaw, when he ſpake in the Mount with God, *&c.*? Nay, but he would ſee more, for there is always more to be ſeen, and there is in a godly Soul always more Deſire to ſee it; the more is ſeen, the more is loved and deſired; taſting of it only begets a kindly Appetite after it, and the more taſted, ſtill

the freſher and more recent, but yet it is above both Deſire and Fruition, thou canſt not ſee my Face, &c. All our Knowledge of God, all our Attainments of Experience of Him, do reach but to ſome dark and confuſed Apprehenſion of what he is; the cleareſt and neareſt Sight of God in this World, is, as if a Man were not known but by his Back, which is a great Point of Eſtrangement: 'Tis ſaid, in Heaven we ſhall ſee Him Face to Face, and fully as he is, becauſe then the Soul is made capable of it.

Two Things in us here puts us in an Incapacity of Nearneſs with God, Infirmity, and Iniquity: Infirmity in us cannot behold his Glory, 'tis of ſo weak Eyes, that the Brightneſs of the Sun would ſtrike it blind; and Iniquity in us, he cannot behold it, becauſe he is of pure Eyes, that can look on no unclean Thing; 'tis the only Thing in the Creation that God's Holineſs hath Antipathy at, and therefore he is ſtill about the deſtroying of the Body of Sin in us, about the purging from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit; and till the Soul be thus purged of all Sin, by the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt, it cannot be a Temple for an immediate Viſion of Him, and an immediate Exhibition of God to us: Sin is the Wall of Partition, and the thick Cloud that eclipſes his Glory from us; it is the oppoſite Hemiſphere of Darkneſs, contrary to Light, according to the Acceſs or Receſs of God's Preſence it is more or leſs dark; the more Sin reigns in thee, the leſs of God is in thee, and the more Sin be ſubdued, the readier and nearer is God's Preſence: But let us comfort our ſelves, that one Day we ſhall put off both Infirmity and Iniquity, Mortality ſhall put on Immortality, and Corruption be clothed with Incorruption; we ſhall leave the Rags of mortal Weakneſs in the Grave, and our menſtrous Cloaths of Sin behind us, and then ſhall the weak Eyes of Fleſh be made like Eagles Eyes, to behold the Sun; and then ſhall the Soul be cloathed with Holineſs, as with a Garment, which God ſhall delight to look upon, becauſe he ſees his own Image in that Glaſs.

We come to the Lord's ſatisfying of *Moſes*'s Deſire, and proclaiming his Name before him; it is himſelf only can tell you what He is; it is not Miniſters Preaching, or other Diſcourſe, can proclaim that Name to you; we may, indeed, ſpeak over thoſe Words unto you, but it is the Lord that muſt write that Name upon your Heart. He only can diſcover his Glory to your Spirit: There is a Spirit of Life which cannot be encloſed in Letters and Syllables, or tranſmitted through your Ears into your Hearts, but He himſelf muſt create it inwardly, and ſtir up the inward Senſe and Feeling of that Name, of thoſe Attributes: Faith, indeed, comes by Hearing, and our Knowledge in this Life is through a Glaſs, darkly, through Ordinances, and Senſes; but there muſt be an inward teaching and ſpeaking to your Souls to make that effectual, *the anointing teacheth you all Things*, 1 Joh. ii. 27. Alas! 'tis the Separation of that from the Word that makes it ſo unprofitable; if the Spirit of God were inwardly writing what the Word is teaching, then ſhould your Souls be living Epiſtles, that ye might read God's Name on them: O, be much in imploring of, and depending on him that teacheth to profit, who only can declare unto your Souls what He is.

Theſe Names expreſs His Eſſence or Being, and His Properties, what He is in Himſelf, and what He is to us; in Himſelf, He is *Jehovah*, or a *Self-being*, αὐτ ὤν, as we heard in iii. *Chap. I am that I am*, and EL, a ſtrong God, or Almighty

Almighty God; which two hold out unto us the absolute incomprehensible Perfection of God, eminently and infinitely enclosing within Himself all the Perfections of the Creatures; the unchangeable and mutable Being of God, who was, and is, and is to come, without Succession, without Variation, or Shadow of turning; and then the Almighty Power of God, by which, without Difficulty, by the Inclination and Beck of His Will and Pleasure, He can make, or unmake all, create, or annihilate, to whom nothing is impossible; which three, if they were pondered by us, till our Souls received the Stamp of them, they would certainly be powerful to abstract, and draw our Hearts from the vain, changeable, and empty Shadow of the Creature, and gather our scattered Affections that are parted among them, because of their Insufficiency, that all might unite in one, and joyn with this Self-sufficient and eternal God; I say, if a Soul did indeed believe and consider, how All-sufficient He is, how insufficient all Things else are, would it not cleave to Him, and draw near to Him, *Psal.* lxxiii. *ult.* It is the very Torment and Vexation of the Soul to be thus racked, distracted, and divided about many Things; and therefore many, because there is none of them can supply all our Wants; our Wants are infinite, our Desires insatiable, and the Good that is in any Thing is limited and bounded, it can serve one but for one Use, and another for another Use, and when all are together, they can but supply some Wants, but they leave much of the Soul empty: But often, these outward things cross one another, and cannot consist together; and hence ariseth much Strife and Debate in a Soul, his need requireth both, and both will not agree: But O that you could see this one universal Good, One for all, and above all, your Souls would choose Him certainly, your Souls would trust in Him; ye would say, *Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride on Horses:* Creatures shall not satisfie us, we will seek our Happiness in Thee and no where else; since we have tasted this new Wine, away with the old, the new is better. I beseech you, make God your Friend, for He is a great One; whether He be a Friend or an Enemy, He hath two Properties that make Him either most comfortable, or most terrible, according as He is at Peace or War with Souls, *Eternity*, and *Omnipotency*. You were all once Enemies to Him. O consider what a Party you have, an Almighty Party, and an unchangeable Party; and if you will make Peace with Him, and that in Christ, then know, He is the best Friend in the World, because He is Unchangeable, and Almighty; if He be thy Friend, He will do all for thee He can do, and thou hast need of: But many Friends willing to do, yet have not Ability, but he hath Power to do what he will, and pleases; many Friends are changeable, their Affections dry up, of themselves die; and therefore even Princes Friendship is but a vain Confidence, for they shall die, and then their Thoughts of Favour perish with them, but He abides the same for all Generations, there is no End of his Duration, and no End of his Affection; He can still say, *I am that I am*; what I was, I am, and I will be what I am; Men cannot say so, they are like the Brooks that the Companies of *Teman* looked after, and thought to have found them in Summer as they left them in Winter; but behold they were dried up, and the Companies ashamed. God cannot make thee ashamed of thy Hope, because He is faithful and able. Ability and Fidelity is a sure Anchor to hold by in all Storms and Tempests.

Such

Such is God in Himself; now, there are two Manner of Ways He vents Himself towards the Creatures, in a comfortable Way, or in a terrible Way. This glorious Perfection, and Almighty Power, hath an Issue upon Sinners, and it runs in a twofold Channel, of Mercy, or Justice: Of Mercy towards miserable Sinners that find themselves lost, and flee unto Him and take hold of His Strength; and Justice towards all those that flatter themselves in their own Eyes, and continue in their Sins, and put the evil Day far off: There is no Mercy for such as fear not Justice, and there is no Justice for such as flee from it unto Mercy. The Lord exhibits Himself in a twofold Appearance, according to the Condition of Sinners; He sits on a Throne and Tribunal of Grace and Mercy, to make Access to the vilest Sinner, who is afraid of his Wrath, and would fain be at Peace with him; and he sits on a Throne of Justice and Wrath, to seclude and debar presumptuous Sinners from Holiness. There were two Mountains under the Law, one of Cursings, and another of Blessings; these are the Mountains God setsHis Throne upon, and from these He speaks, and sentences Mankind: From the Mountain of Cursings, He hath pronounced a Curse, and condemnatory Sentence upon all Flesh, *for all have sinned*, therefore, he concludes all under Sin, that all Flesh might stop their Mouth, and the whole World become guilty before God. Now, the Lord having thus condemned all Mankind because of Disobedience: He sits again upon the Mountain of Blessings, and pronounces a Sentence of Absolution, of as many as have taken with the Sentence of Condemnation, and appealed to His Grace and Mercy, and those which do not so, the Sentence of Condemnation stands above their Heads unrepealed; He erects His Tribunal of Justice in the World for this End, that all Flesh might once be convicted before him, and therefore He cites, as it were, and summons all Men to sist themselves and compear before His Tribunal, to be judged; He lays out an Accusation in the Word against them; He takes their Consciences Witness of the Truth of all that is charged on them, and then pronounces that Sentence in their Conscience, *Cursed is he that abides not in all Things*, which the Conscience subsumes, and concludes itself accursed, and subscribes to the Equity of the Sentence: And thus the Man is guilty before God, and his Mouth stopped; he hath no Excuses, no Pretences, he can see no Way to escape from Justice, and God is justified, by this Means, in his speaking and judging, *Psal.* li. 4. The Soul ratifies and confirms the Truth and Justice of all his Threatnings, and Judgments, *Rom.* iii. 4. Now, for such Souls as joyn with God in judging and condemning themselves, the Lord hath erected a Throne of Grace, and Tribunal of Mercy in the Word, whereupon he hath set His Son Jesus Christ, *Psal.* ii. 6. and lxxxix. 14. and xlv. 6. *Heb.* i. 8. And O, this Throne is a comfortable Throne, Mercy and Truth goes before the Face of the King to welcome and entertain miserable Sinners, and to make Access to them. And from this Throne Jesus Christ holds out the Sceptre of the Gospel, to invite Sinners, self-condemned Sinners, to come to Him alone, who hath gotten all final Judgment committed to Him, that *He may give eternal Life to whom he will*, Joh. v. 21, 22. O, that is a sweet and ample Commission given to our Friend and Brother Jesus Christ, Power to repeal Sentences past against us, Power to loose them whom Justice hath bound, Power

and

and Authority to absolve them whom Justice hath condemned, and to bless them whom the Law hath cursed, and to open their Mouth to Praise whose Mouth Sin and Guiltiness hath stopped: Power to give the Answer of a good Conscience to thy evil self-tormenting Conscience; in a Word, He hath Power to give Life, to make alive, and heal those who are killed or wounded by the Commandment. Now, I say, seeing God hath of Purpose established this Throne of Mercy in the Word, thou mayest well, after receiving and acknowledging of the Justice of the Curse of the Law, appeal to Divine Mercy and Grace, sitting on another Throne of the Gospel; thou may, if thy Conscience urge thee to despair, and to conclude there is no Hope, thou may, I say, appeal from thy Conscience, from Satan, from Justice, unto Jesus Christ, who is holding out the Scepter to thee; the Minister calls thee, Rise and come, stand no longer before that Bar, for it is a subordinate Judicatory, there is a Way to redress thee by a higher Court of Grace: Thou may say to Justice, to Satan, to thy own Conscience, It is true, I confess, that I deserve that Sentence; I am guilty, and can say nothing against it, while I stand alone, but though I cannot satisfie, and have not; yet there is one Jesus Christ, who gave his Life a Ransom for many, and whom God hath given as a Propitiation for Sins; He hath satisfied and paid the Debt in my Name; go and apprehend the Cautioner, since He hath undertaken it, nay, He hath done it, and is absolved. Thou had Him in thy Hands, O Justice! thou had Him Prisoner under the Power of Death; since you have let Him go, then He is acquitted from all the Charge of my Sins; and therefore, since I know that He is now a King, and hath a Throne to judge the World, and plead the Cause of the poor Sheep, I will appeal to Him, refer the Cause to His Decision, I will make my Supplication to Him, and certainly He will hear, and interpose Himself between Wrath and me, He will rescind this Sentence of Condemnation, since he Himself was condemned for us, and is justified, *It is Christ that dyed, nay rather is risen again, who shall condemn me? He is near that justifies me*, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Now if thou do indeed flee into Him for Refuge, that City is open for thee, and nothing to prejudge thy Entry: But no Curse, no Condemnation can enter in it, *Rom.* viii. 1. He will justifie and absolve thee from all Things whereof the Law could not justifie thee, but condemn thee, *There is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared. David* may teach thee this Manner of Application, *Psal.* cxxx. and cxlii. 2. of appealing from the deserved Curse, to free undeserved Blessing and Mercy in Christ.

Let us consider this Name of the Lord, and it shall answer all our Suspicions of Him; all our Objections against coming to Him and believing in Him, it is certain, Ignorance is the Mother of Unbelief, together with the natural Perverseness of our Hearts, if we knew His Name we would trust in Him, if His Names were pondered and considered, we would believe in Him. Satan knows this, and therefore his great slight and cunning is, to hold our Minds fixed on the Consideration of our Misery, and desperate Estate, he keeps the awakened Conscience still upon that comfortless Sight, and he labours to represent God by halves, and that is a false Representation of God, he represents Him as cloathed with Justice and Vengeance, as a consuming Fire, in which Light a Soul can see nothing but Desperation written; and he labours to hold out the Thoughts of

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His Mercy and Grace, or diverts a Soul from the Consideration of his Promises, whence it comes, that they are not established, that though Salvation be near, yet it is far from them in their Sense and Apprehension, therefore I say, you should labour to get an intire Sight of God, and you shall see Him best in His Word, there He reveals Himself, and there you find, if ye consider, that which may make you fear Him indeed, but never flee from Him, that which may abase you, but withall embolden you to come to Him though trembling: What ever Thought possess thee of thine own Misery, of thy own Guiltiness, labour to counterpoise that with a Thought of His Mercy and free Promises: What ever be suggested of His Holiness and Justice, hear Himself speak out His own Name, and thou shalt hear as much of Mercy and Grace, as may make these not terrible unto thee, though High and Honourable. The Lord hath so framed the Expression and Proclamation of His Name in this Place, that first a Word of Majesty and Power is premised, (*The Lord, The Lord God*) that it may compose our Hearts in Fear and Reverence of such a glorious One, and make a preparatory Impression of the Majesty of our God, which indeed is the Foundation of all true Faith. It begins to adore and admire a Deity, a Majesty hid from the World, the Thoughts of His Power and Glory possesses the Soul first, and makes it begin to tremble to think that it hath such a High and holy One to deal with.

But in the next Place, you have the most sweet, alluring, comforting Stiles that can be imagined, to meet with the trembling and languishing Condition of a Soul that would be ready to faint before such a Majesty; here Mercy takes it by the Hand, and gives a Cordial of *Grace, Pardon, Forgiveness*, &c. to it, which revives the Soul of the humble, and intermingles some rejoycing with former trembling; Majesty and Greatness goes before to abase and humble the Soul in its own Eyes, and Mercy and Goodness seconds them, to lift up those who are Low, and exalt the Humble, and in the Description of this, the Lord spends more Words, according to the Necessity of a Soul, to signifie to us how great and strong Consolation may be grounded on His Name, how accessible He is, though He dwell in inaccessible Light, how lovely he is though he be the high and the lofty One, how good He is, though He be great, how Merciful He is, though He be majestick; in a Word, that those that flee to Him may have all Invitation, all Encouragement to come, and nothing to discourage, to prejudge their Welcome, that who ever will, may come, and nothing may hinder on His Part. And then after all this, He subjoyns a Word of His Justice, in avenging Sin, to shew us that He leaves that as the last, that He essays all gaining ways of Mercy with us, that He is not very much delighted with the Death of Sinners, that so whosoever perishes may blame themselves, for hating their own Salvation, and forsaking their own Mercy.

Now whoever thou art that apprehends a dreadful and terrible God, and thy self a miserable and wretched Sinner, thou canst find no Comfort in God's Highness and Power, but it looks terrible upon thee, because thou doubts of His Good-will to save and pardon thee: Thou sayest with the blind Man, if thou wilt thou can do it; thou art a strong God, but what Comfort can I have in thy Strength, since I know not thy Good-will? I say, the Lord answers thee in this Name, *I am merciful*, saith the Lord, if thou be miserable, I am merci-

merciful as well as strong; if thou have Sin and Misery, I have Compassion and Pity: My Mercy may be a Copy and Pattern to all Men to learn it of Me, even towards their own Brethren, *Luke* vi. 36. Therefore he is called *the Father of Mercies*, 2 Cor. i. 3. *Misericors est cui alterius miseria cordi est.* Mercy hath its very Name from Misery, for it is no other Thing than to lay another's Misery to Heart, not to despise it, not to add to it, but to help it; it is a strong Inclination to succour the Misery of Sinners, therefore thou needs no other thing to commend thee to him. Art thou miserable, and knows it indeed? Then He is merciful, and know that also, these two suit well.

Nay, but saith the convinced Soul, I know not if He will be merciful to me, for what am I? There is nothing in me to be regarded, I have nothing to conciliate Favour, and all that may procure Hatred. But, saith the Lord, *I am gracious*, and dispense Mercy freely, without respect to Condition or Qualification: Say not, if I had such a Measure of Humiliation as such a one, if I loved Him so much, if I had so much godly Sorrow and Repentance, then, I think he would be merciful to me. Say not so, for behold He is gracious, He hath Mercy on whom He will have Mercy, and there is no other Cause, no Motive to procure it, it comes from within His own Breast. It is not thy Repentance will make Him love thee, nor thy Hardness of Heart will make Him hate thee, or obstruct the Vent of His Grace towards thee: No, if it be Grace, it is no more of Works, no Works in that Way that thou imagines; it is not of Repentance, not of Faith, in that Sense thou conceivest, but it is freely, without the Hire, without the Price of Repentance, or Faith, because all those are but the free Gifts of Grace; thou would have these Graces to procure His Favour, and to make them the Ground of thy believing in His Promises, but Grace is without Money, it immediately contracts with discovered Misery, so that if thou do discover in thy self Misery and Sin, though thou find nothing else, yet do not cast away Confidence, but so much the more address thy self to Mercy and Grace, which doth not seek Repentance in thee, but brings Repentance and Faith with them unto thee; yet there is something in the awakned Conscience, I have gone on long in Sin, I have been a presumptuous Sinner, can He endure me longer? Well, hear what the Lord saith, *I am long-suffering*, and patient; and if he had not been so, we had been damned ere now, Patience hath a long Term, and we cannot out-run it, out-weary it. Why do we not wonder that he presently and instantly executed His Wrath on Angels, and gave them not one Hour's Space for Repentance, but cast them down headlong into Destruction, as in a Moment; and yet His Majesty hath so long delayed the Execution of our Sentence, and calls unto Repentance and Forgiveness, that we may escape the Condemnation of Angels: His Patience is not Slackness and Negligence, as Men count it, 2 *Pet.* iii. 9. He sits not in Heaven as an Idol and idle Spectator of what Men are doing; but he observes all Wrongs, and is sensible of them also: And if we were mindful and sensible of them also, he would forget them. He is *long-suffering*: This is extended and stretched-out Patience beyond all Expectation, beyond all deserving, yea, contrary to it. Therefore, as long as he forbears, if thou apprehend thy Misery and Sin, and Continuance in it; do not conclude that it is desperate, *Why should a living Man complain?* As long as Patience

lengthens the Life, if thou deſire to come to Him, believe He will accept thee.

But ſaith the doubting Soul, I am exceeding perverſe, and wicked, there is nothing in me but Wickedneſs, it ſo abounds in me, that there is nothing in me but Wickedneſs, it ſo abounds in me, that there is none like me; but ſaith the Lord, *I am abundant in Goodneſs.* Thy Wickedneſs, though it be great, it is but a created Wickedneſs, but my Goodneſs is the Goodneſs of God; I am as abundant in Grace and Goodneſs as thou art in Sin, nay, infinitely more; thy Sin is but the Tranſgreſſion of a finite Creature, but my Mercy is the Compaſſion of an infinite God, it can ſwallow it up; ſuppoſe thy Sin cry come up to Heaven, yet Mercy reaches above Heaven, and is built up for ever. Here is an Invitation to all Sinners to come and taſte, O come and taſte and ſee how good the Lord is; Goodneſs is communicative, it diffuſes it ſelf, like the Sun's Light: There is Riches of His Goodneſs, *Rom.* ii. 4. Poor Soul, thou canſt not ſpend it though thou have many Wants.

But I am full of Doubtings, Fears and Jealouſies; I cannot believe in His Promiſes, I often queſtion them; How, how then will He perform them? I ſay, (ſaith the Lord) *I am abundant in Truth,* He will certainly perform, *Shall our Unbelief,* or Doubting, *make the Faith of God of none Effect,* &c. *Rom.* iii. 3. *God forbid,* His Faithfulneſs reaches unto the Clouds, He will keep Covenant with thee, whoſe Soul hath choſen Him, though thou often queſtion and doubt of Him. Indeed, thou ſhouldſt not give Indulgence to thy Doubtings and Jealouſies, but look on them as high Provocations; for what can be more grievous to fervent Love than to meet with Jealouſie? Jealouſie would quench any Creatures Love, but though it grieve and provoke Him, yet He will not change, He will not diminiſh His; only do not think your Diſputings, and Quarrelling innocent and Harmleſs Things; no certainly, they grieve the Spirit, ſtir up the Beloved to go away, as it were, before He pleaſe, and make thee walk without Comfort, and without Fruit; yet He will bear with, and not quench the ſmoaking Flax of a Believer's Deſires, though they do not ariſe to the Flame of Aſſurance.

But the wounded Spirit hath one or two Burdens more: I have abuſed much Mercy, how can Mercy pity me? I have turned Grace unto Wantonneſs, ſo that when I look to Mercy and Grace to comfort me, they do rather challenge me; the Sins of none are like mine, none of ſuch a hainous preſumptuous Nature: But let us hear what God the Lord ſpeaks, *I keep Mercy for Thouſands, and forgive Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin;* Thou haſt waſted much Mercy, but more is behind, all the Treaſure is not ſpent; though there were many thouſand Worlds beſide, I could pardon them all, if they would flee unto my Mercy, thou ſhalt not be ſtraitned in me, Mercy will pardon thy Abuſe of Mercy, it will forgive all Faults thou doſt againſt it ſelf. Thou that ſins againſt the Son of Man, the Redeemer of the World, and Remedy of Sin, yet there is Pardon for thee whatever the Quality, Condition, or Circumſtance of thy Sin be; whoever, convinced of it, and loadned with it, deſires reſt to thy Soul, thou may find it in Chriſt, whoſe former Kindneſs thou haſt anſwered with Contempt; many Sins, many great Sins, and theſe preſumptuous Sins cannot exclude, nay, no Sin can exclude

clude a willing Soul. Unbelief keeps thee unwilling, and ſo excludes thee.

Now, as the Spider ſucks Poiſon out of the ſweeteſt Flower, ſo the moſt Part of Souls ſuck nothing but Deluſion, and Preſumption, and Hardning, out of the Goſpel; Many Souls reaſon for more Liberty to Sin from Mercy; but behold, how the Lord backs it with a dreadful Word, *who will by no Means clear the guilty.* As many as do not condemn themſelves, and judge themſelves before His Tribunal of Juſtice, there is no reſcinding of the condemnatory Sentence, but it ſtands above your Heads, *He that believes not is condemned already.* Juſtice hath condemned all by a Sentence; he that doth not in the Senſe of this flee into Jeſus Chriſt from Sin and Wrath is already condemned; his Sentence is ſtanding, there needs no new one, ſince he flees not to Mercy for Abſolution, the Sentence of Condemnation ſtands unrepealed. You guilty Souls, who clear your ſelves, God will not clear you; and alas! How many of you do clear your ſelves? Do you not extenuate and mince your Sins? How hard is it to extort any Confeſſion of Guilt out of you, but in the general? If we condeſcend to Particulars, many of you will plead Innocency, almoſt in every Thing, though you have, like Children, learned to ſpeak theſe Words, *That ye are Sinners.* I beſeech you conſider it, it is no light Matter, for *God will by Means clear the guilty*; by no Means, by no Intreaties, no Flatteries; What? Will He not pardon ſin? Yes indeed: His Name tells you He will pardon all kind of Sins, and abſolve all manner of guilty Perſons, but yet ſuch as do condemn themſelves, ſuch as are guilty in their own Conſcience, and their Mouths ſtopped before God; you who do not enter into the ſerious Examination of your ways, and do not arraign your ſelves before God's Tribunal daily, till you find your ſelves loathſome and deſperate, and no Refuge for you; you who do flatter your ſelves always in the Hope of Heaven, and put the Fear of Hell always from you, I ſay, God will by no Means, no Prayers, no Intreaties clear or pardon you, becauſe you come not to Jeſus Chriſt, *in whom is preached Forgiveneſs and Remiſſion of Sins.* You who take Liberty to Sin, becauſe God is gracious, and delay Repentance till the End, becauſe God is Long-ſuffering; know God will not clear you; He is Holy and Juſt as He is Merciful. If His Mercy make thee not fear and tremble before Him, and do not ſeparate thee from thy Sins; if Remiſſion of Sins be not the ſtrongeſt Perſwaſion to thy Soul of the removing of Sin, certainly thou doſt in vain preſume upon His Mercy. Now, conſider what Influence all this glorious Proclamation had on *Moſes*; it ſtirs up in him Reverence and Affection, Reverence to ſuch a Glorious Majeſty, and great Deſire to have him amongſt them, and to be more one with Him: If thy Soul rightly diſcover God, it cannot but abaſe thee, he made haſte to bow down and worſhip: O, God's Majeſty is a ſurpriſing and aſtoniſhing Thing, it would bow thy Soul in the Duſt if it were preſented to thee; labour to keep the right and intire Repreſentation of God in thy Sight, His whole Name, *Strong*, *Merciful*, and *Juſt*; *Great*, *Good*, and *Holy*. I ſay, keep both in thy View, for half Repreſentations are dangerous, either to beget Preſumption, and Security, when thou looks on Mercy alone, or Deſpair, when thou looks on Juſtice, and Power alone; let thy Soul conſider all jointly, that it may receive a mixed Impreſſion of all; and this

is the Holy Compoſition, and Temper of a Believer, Rejoice with trembling, Love with Fear; let all thy Diſcoveries of Him aim at more Union and Communion with Him, who is ſuch a Self-ſufficient, All-ſufficient, and Eternal Being.

John iv. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they who worſhip Him muſt worſhip Him in Spirit and in Truth.*

WE have here ſomething of the Nature of God pointed out to us, and ſomething of our Duty towards Him. *God is a Spirit*, that is His Nature; and *Man muſt worſhip Him*, that is his Duty; and that *in Spirit and Truth*, that is the right Manner of the Duty: If theſe three were well pondered till they did ſink into the Bottom of our Spirits, they would make us indeed Chriſtians, not in the Letter, but in the Spirit: That is preſuppoſed to all Chriſtian Worſhip and Walking, to know what God is; 'tis indeed the *Primo cognitum* of Chriſtianity, the firſt Principle of true Religion, the very Root out of which ſprings and grows up walking ſuitably with, and worſhipping anſwerably of, a known God. I fear, much of our Religion be like the *Athenians*, they builded an Altar to an unknown God; and like the *Samritans*, who worſhipped they knew not what. Such a Worſhip, I know not what it is, when the God worſhipped is not known. The two Parents of true Religion are, The Knowledge of God, and of our ſelves; this, indeed, is the Beginning of the Fear of God, which the wiſe Preacher calls, The Beginning of true Wiſdom: And theſe two, as they beget true Religion, ſo they cannot truely be one without the other: It is not many Notions, and Speculations about the Divine Nature, it is not high and ſtrained Conceptions of God, that comprizes the true Knowledge of Him; many think they know ſomething, when they can ſpeak of thoſe Myſteries, in ſome ſingular Way, and in ſome Terms, removed from common Underſtandings, which neither themſelves nor others know what they mean; and thus they are preſumptuous, ſelf-conceited, knowing nothing as they ought to know; There is a Knowledge that puffs up, and there is a Knowledge that caſts down, a Knowledge in many that doth but ſwell them, not grow them; 'tis but a Tumor full of Wind, a vain, and empty, frothy Knowledge, that is neither good for edifying others, nor ſaving a Man's ſelf; a Knowledge that a Man knows, and reflects upon ſo as to aſcend upon the Height of it, and meaſure himſelf by the Degrees of it; this is not the true Knowledge of God, which knows not it ſelf, looks not back upon it ſelf, but ſtraight towards God, His Holineſs and Glory, and our Baſeneſs and Miſery, and therefore it conſtrains the Soul to be aſhamed of it ſelf in ſuch a glorious Preſence, and to make haſte to worſhip, as *Moſes*, *Job*, *Iſaiah*, did.

This Definition of God, if we did truly underſtand it, we could not but worſhip him in another Manner. *God is a Spirit*: Many ignorant People form in their own Mind ſome Likeneſs, and Image of God, who is inviſible; you know how ye fancy to yourſelves ſome bodily Shape,

Shape; when you conceive of him, you think he is some Reverend and Majestick Person, sitting on a Throne in Heaven: But I beseech you, correct your Mistakes of Him; there is outward Idolatry, and there is inward; there is Idolatry in Action, when Men paint or engrave some Similitude of God; and there is Idolatry in Imagination, when the Fancy and Apprehension runs upon some Image, or Likeness of God; the first is among Papists, but I fear the latter be too common among us, and it is indeed all one, to form such a Similitude in our Mind, and to engrave or paint it without; so that the God whom many of us worship, is not the living and true God, but a painted or graven Idol. When God appeared most visible to the World, as at the giving out of the Law, yet no Man did see any Likeness at all, he did not come under the Perception of the most subtle Sense, he could not be perceived but by the retired Understanding, going aside from all Things visible, and therefore you do but fancy an Idol to yourselves, instead of God, when you apprehend him under the Likeness of any visible, or sensible Thing, and so whatever Love, or Fear, or Reverence you have, it is all but mispent Superstition, the Love and Fear of an Idol.

I. Know then, that God is a Spirit, and therefore he is like none of all these Things you see, or hear, or smell, or taste, or touch: The Heavens are glorious indeed, the Light is full of Glory, but he is not like that. If all your Senses should make an Inquiry, and search for him throughout the World, you should not find him: Though he be near hand every one of us, yet our Eyes and Ears and all your Senses, might travel the Length of the Earth, and Breadth of the Sea, and should not find him, even as you might search all the Corners of Heaven, e're you could hear or see an Angel; if you would sawe a Man asunder, and resolve him in Atoms of Dust, yet you could not perceive a Soul within him; why? Because these are Spirits, and so without the Reach of your Senses.

II. If God be a Spirit, then he is invisible, and dwells in Light inaccessible, which no Man hath seen or can see, then our poor narrow Minds that are drowned, as it were, and immersed into Bodies of Clay, and in this State of Mortality, receives all Knowledge by the Senses, cannot frame any suitable Notion of his spiritual and abstracted Nature. We cannot conceive what our own Soul is, but by some sensible Operation flowing from it, and the Height that our Knowledge of that noble Part of ourselves amounts to, is but this dark, and confused Conception, that the Soul is some inward Principle of Life, and Sense and Reason: How then is it possible for us to conceive aright of the Divine Nature, as it is in itself, but only in a dark and general Way? We guess at His Majesty, by the glorious Emanations of His Power, and Wisdom, and the Rays thereof which he displays abroad in all the Work of His Hands, and from all these concurring Testimonies, and Evidences of His Majesty, we gather this confused Notion of Him, that He is the Fountain-self-Independent Being, the Original of all these Things, and more absolute in the World, than the Soul is in the Body, the true *Anima mundi*, the very Life and the Light of Men, and the Soul that quickens, moves and forms all this visible World, that makes all Things visible, and himself is invisible: Therefore it is that the Lord speaks to us in Scripture of Himself, according to our Capacities, of His Face, His Right Hand, and Arm, His Throne,

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His Scepter, His Back Parts, His Anger, His Fury, His Repentance, His Grief, and Sorrow; none of which are properly in His ſpiritual, immortal, and unchangeable Nature; but becauſe our Dulneſs and Slowneſs is ſuch, in apprehending Things ſpiritual, it being almoſt without the Sphere and Comprehenſion of the Soul while in the Body, which is almoſt addicted unto the Senſes in the Body; therefore the Lord accommodates Himſelf unto our Terms and Notions; *balbutit nobiſcum*, he like a kind Father ſtammers with his ſtammering Children, ſpeaks to them in their own Dialect; but withal would have us conceive He is not really ſuch a One, but infinitely removed in His own Being from all theſe Imperfections. So when you hear of theſe Terms in Scripture, O beware ye conceive God to be ſuch a one, as yourſelves: But, in theſe Expreſſions not beſeeming his Majeſty, becauſe below him, learn your own Ignorance of his glorious Majeſty, your Dulneſs and Incapacity to be ſuch, as the Holy One muſt come down as it were in ſome bodily Appearance, e're you can underſtand any Thing of him.

III. If God be a Spirit, then he is moſt perfect, and moſt powerful: All Imperfection, all Infirmity, and Weakneſs in the Creature, is founded in the groſs and material Part of it. You ſee the more Matter and bodily Subſtance is in any Thing, it is the more lumpiſh, heavy, and void of all Action; it is the more ſpiritual, pure, and refined Part of the Creation, that hath moſt Activity in it, and is the Principle of all Motions, and Actions; You ſee a little Flie hath more Action in it, than a great Mountain, becauſe there are Spirits in it which move it. The Bottom of the World contains the Dregs of the Creation as it were, a Maſs and Lump of heavy Earth, but the higher and more diſtant Bodies be from that, the more pure and ſubtile they are; and the more pure and ſubtile they be, the more Action, Virtue, and Efficacy they have: The Earth ſtands like a dead Lump, but the Sea moves, and the Air being thinner and purer than both, moves more eaſily and ſwiftly: But go up higher, and ſtill the Motion is ſwifter, and the Vertue and Influence is the more powerful: What is a dead Body when the Soul and Spirit is out of it? It hath no more Vertue nor Efficacy, than ſo much Clay, although by the Preſence of the Spirit of it, it was active, agile, ſwift, ſtrong and nimble; ſo much then as any Thing hath of Spirit in it, ſo much the more perfect and powerful it is. Then I beſeech you conſider what a one the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh muſt be, the very Fountain-ſpirit, the Self-being ſpirit, *αὐτὸ πνεῦμα*. When the Soul of a Man, or the Spirit of a Horſe, hath ſo much Vertue, to ſtir up a Lump of Earth, and to quicken it to ſo many diverſe Operations, even though that Soul and Spirit did not, nay, could not make that Piece of Earth they dwell in, then, what muſt His Power and Vertue be, that made all thoſe Things? Who gave Power and Vertue, even to the Spirits of all Fleſh; *their Horſes* ſaith God, *are Fleſh, and not Spirit*, Iſa. xxx. Becauſe, in Compariſon of His Majeſty, the very Spirits in them, are but like a dead Lump of Fleſh? If he ſhould draw in his Breath (as it were) they would have no more Virtue to ſave the *Iſraelites*, then ſo many Lumps of Fleſh or Clay: For He is the Spirit of all Spirits, that quickens, actuates, and moves them to their ſeveral Operations, and Influences, *Anima mundi, & anima animarum mundi.* An Angel hath more Power than all Men united

ted in one Body. Satan is called *the Prince of the Air*, and *God of this World*, for he hath more Efficacy and Vertue, to commove the Air, and raise Tempests, than all the Swarms of multiplied Mankind, though gathered into one Army; if the Lord did not restrain and limit his Power, he were able to destroy whole Nations at once: An Angel killed many thousands of *Senacharib*'s Army in one Night, what would many Angels do then, if the Lord pleased to apply them to that Work? *O what is Man that he should magnifie himself*, or Glory in Strength, or Skill? Beasts are stronger than Men, but Man's weaker Strength being strengthned with more Skill, proves stronger than they; but in respect of Angels he hath neither Strength nor Wisdom.

IV. If God be a Spirit, then He is not circumscribed by any Place; and if an infinite Spirit, then he is every where, no Place can include Him, and no Body can exclude Him. He is within all Things, yet not included nor bounded within them, and He is without all Things, yet not excluded from them: *Intra omnia, non tamen inclusus in illis; extra omnia, nec tamen exclusus ab illis.* You know every Body hath its own Bounds and Limits circumscribed to it, and shoots out all other bodily Things out of the same Space, so that before the least Body want some Space, it will put all the Universe in Motion, and make every Thing about it to change its Place, and possess another; but a Spirit can pass thorow all of them, and never disturb them; a Legion may be in one Man, and have Room enough. If there were a Wall of Brass, or Tower, having no Open, neither above, or beneath, no Body could enter, but by breaking thorow, and making a Breach into it, but an Angel or Spirit could storm it without a Breach, and pierce thorow it, without any Division of it: How much more doth the Maker of all Spirits fil all in all; the Thickness of the Earth doth not keep Him out, nor the Largeness of the Heavens contain Him: How then do we circumscribe and limit Him within the Bounds of a publick House, or the Heavens? O, how narrow Thoughts have we of His immense Greatness? Who, without Division or Multiplication of Himself, fills all the Corners of the World, whose indivisible Unity is equivalent to an infinite Extension, and Divisibility; how often I pray you, do you reflect upon this? *God is near hand every one of us*, who of us thinks of a Divine Majesty nearer us than our very Souls and Consciences, *in whom we live, and move, and have our Being?* How is it we move, and think not with wonder of that first Mover, in whom we move? How is it we live and persevere in Being, and do not always consider this Fountain-being, in whom we live and have our Being? O, the Atheism of many Souls professing God! We do speak, walk, eat and drink; and go about all our Businesses, as if we were self-beings, independent of any, never thinking of that all present quickening Spirit, that acts us, moves us, speaks in us, makes us to walk, and eat and drink; as the barbarous People, who see, hear, speak, and reason, and never once reflect upon the Principle of all these to discern a Soul within: This is brutish, and in this, Man who was made of a straight Countenance, to look upward to God, and to know himself and his Maker, till he might be differenced from all Creatures below, is degenerated, and become like the Beasts that perish? Who of us believes this all-present God? We imagine that he is shut up in Heaven, and takes no such Notice

tice of Affairs below; but certainly, He is not so far from us: Though He shew more of His Glory above, yet He is as present and observant below.

V. If He be a Spirit, then as he is incomprehensible and immense in Being, so also there is no Comprehension of His Knowledge. The nearer any Creature comes to the Nature of a Spirit, the more Knowing and Understanding it is; Life is the most excellent Being, and Understanding is the most excellent Life. *Materia est iners & mortua*, the nearer any thing is to the earthly Matter, as it hath less Action, so less Life and Feeling; Man is nearer an Angel than Beasts, and therefore He hath a knowing understanding Spirit in Him. There is a Spirit in Man, and the more or less this Spirit of Man is abstracted from sensual and material Things, it lives the more excellent and pure Life, and is, as it were, more or less delivered from the Chains of the Body. These Souls that have never risen above, and retired from sensible Things, O, how narrow are they, how captivated within the Prison of the Flesh? But when the Lord Jesus comes to set free, He delivers a Soul from this Bondage, He makes these Chains fall off, and leads the Soul apart to converse with God Himself, and to meditate on Things not seen, Sin, Wrath, Hell, and Heaven; and the further it goes from it self, and the more abstracted it is from the Consideration of present Things, the more it lives a Life like Angels: And therefore, when the Soul is separated from the Body, it is then perfectly free, and hath the largest Extent of Knowledge: A Man's Soul must be almost like *Paul's* (*whether out of the Body, or in the Body, I know not*) if he would understand aright spiritual Things: Now then, this infinite Spirit is an all-knowing Spirit, all-seeing Spirit, as well as all-present; *There is no searching of His Understanding*, Isa. xl. 28. and Psal. cxlvii. 5. *Who hath directed His Spirit, or being His Counsellor hath taught Him?* Rom. xi. 34. Isa. xl. 13. He calls the Generations from the Beginning, and known to Him are all His Works from the Beginning. O, that you would always set this God before you, or rather set your selves always in His Presence, in whose Sight you are always: How would it compose our Hearts to Reverence and Fear in all our Actions, if we did, indeed, believe that the Judge of all the World is an Eye-witness to our most retired and secret Thoughts and Doings? If any Man were as privy to thy Thoughts, as thy own Spirit and Conscience, thou wouldst blush and be ashamed before him; If every one for us could open a Window into one anothers Spirits, I think this Assembly should dismiss as quickly, as that of Christ's, when he bade them that were without Sin cast a Stone at the Woman, we could not look one upon another: O then, Why are we so little apprehensive of the all-searching Eye of God, who can even declare to us our Thought before it be? How much Atheism is rooted in the Heart of the most holy? We do not always meditate, with *David*, *Psal.* cxxxix. on that all-searching and all-knowing Spirit, *who knows our down-sitting, and up-rising, and understands our Thoughts afar off, and who is acquainted with all our Ways*. O, How would we ponder our Path, and examine our Words, and consider our Thoughts before Hand, if we set our selves in the View of such a Spirit, that is within us, and without us, before us, and behind us. He may spare Sinners as long as he pleases, for there is no escaping from Him; you cannot go out of His

His Dominions; nay, you cannot run out of His presence, *Psal.* vii. 8, 9. He can reach you when He pleases, therefore He may delay as long as He pleases.

John iv. 24. *GOD is a Spirit*, &c.

THere are two common Notions engraven on the Hearts of all Men by Nature, That God is, and that He must be worshipped; and these two live and die together; they are clear, or blotted together. According as the Apprehension of God is clear, and distinct, and more deeply engraven on the Soul; so is this Notion of Man's Duty of worshipping God, clear and imprinted on the Soul; and whenever the Actions of Men do prove, that the Conception of the Worship of God is obliterate or worn out; when ever their Transgressions do witness, that a Man hath not a lively Notion of this Duty of God's Worship, that doth also prove, that the very Notion of a Godhead is worn out, and cancelled in the Soul; for How could Souls conceive of God as He is indeed, but they must needs, with *Moses*, *Exod.* xxxiv. make haste to pray and worship? It is the Principle of the very Law of Nature, which shall make the whole World inexcusable, *because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God.* A Father must have Honour, and a Master must have Fear, and God, who is the common Parent, and absolute Master of all, must have Worship, in which Reverence and Fear, mixed with Rejoycing and Affection, predomines; it is supposed, and put beyond all Question that He must be: *He that worships him*, &c. It's not simply said, God is a Spirit and must be worshipped; no, for none can doubt of it. If God be, then certainly Worship is due to Him, for Who is so worshipful? And because it is so beyond all question, therefore Wo to the irreligious World that never puts it in Practice: O, what Excuse can you have, who have not so much as a Form of Godliness? Do you not know, that it's beyond all Controversy, that God must be worshipped? Why then do you deny it in your Practice which all Men must confess in their Conscience? Is not He God the Lord, a living and Self-being Spirit? Then, Must He not have Worshippers? Beasts are not created for it, it is you, O Sons of Men, whom He made for His own Praise; and it is not more suitable to your Natures than it is honourable and glorious. This is the great Dignity and Excellency you are privileged with, beyond the brute Beasts, to have Spirits within you capable of knowing and acknowledging the God of your Spirits: Why then do you both rob and spoil God of his Glory, and cast away your own Excellency? Why do you love to trample on your Ornaments, and wallow in the Puddle, like Beasts, void of Religion, but so much worse than Beasts, that you ought to be better, and were created for a more noble Design. O base-spirited Wretches, who hang down your Souls to this Earth, and follow the Dictates of your own Sense and Lust, and have not so much as an external Form of worshipping God; How far are you come short of the noble Design of your Creation, and the high End of your immortal Souls? If you will not worship God, know, He will have Worshippers; certainly, He will not want it, because He

hath designed so many Souls to stand before Him, and worship Him, and that Number will not fail: He might indeed, have wanted Worshippers; For what Advantage is it to Him? But in this He declares His Love and Respect to Man, that He will not want Honour and Service from Him: It is rather to put Honour upon Him, and to make Him blessed and happy, than for any Gain can amount to Himself by it; for this is indeed the true Honour and Happiness of Man, not to be worshipped and served of other Fellow-creatures, but to worship and serve the Creator: This is the highest Advancement of a Soul, to lye low before Him, and to obey Him, and have our Service accepted of His Majesty: I beseech you strive about this noble Service. Since He must have Worshippers, O, say within your Souls, I must be one; if He had but one, I could not be content if I were not that one; since the Father is *seeking Worshippers*, Ver. 23. O, let Him find thee. Offer thy self to Him, saying, Lord here am I. Should He seek you, who can have no Advantage from you? Should He go about so earnest a Search for true Worshippers, who can have no profit by them? And why do ye not seek Him, since to you all the Gain and Profit redounds? Shall He seek you to make you Happy, and why do ye not seek Him, and Happiness in Him? It is your own Service, I may truly say, and not His so much; for in serving Him thou dost rather serve thy self, for all the Benefit redounds to thy self, though thou must not intend such an End, to serve Him for thy self, but for His Name's Sake; else thou shalt neither honour Him, nor advantage thy self. I pray you let Him not seek in vain, for in these Afflictions He is seeking Worshippers, and if He find you, you are found and saved indeed. Do not then forsake your own Mercy, to run from Him who follows you with Salvation.

As none can be ignorant that God is, and must be worshipped, so it is unknown to the World in what manner He must be worshipped: The most part of Men have some Form in worshipping God, and please themselves in it so well that they think God is well-pleased with it, but few there are who know indeed, what it is to worship Him in a manner acceptable to His Majesty: Now you know it is all one not to worship Him at all, as not to worship Him in that Way He likes to be worshipped: Therefore the most Part of Men are but Self-worshippers, because they please none but themselves in it; it is not the Worship his Soul hath chosen, but their own Invention, for you must take this as an undeniable Ground, that God must be worshipped according to his own Will and Pleasure, and not according to your Humour, or Invention: therefore His Soul abhors Will-worship, devised by Men out of ignorant Zeal, or Superstition, though there might seem much Devotion in it, and much Affection to God; as in the *Israelites* sacrificing their Children what more seeming self-denial? and yet what more real Self-idolatry? God owns not such a Service, for it is not Service and Obedience to His Will and Pleasure, but to Men's own Will and Humour: Therefore a Man must not look for a Reward, but from Himself. Now it is not only Will-worship, when the Matter and Substance of the Worship is not commanded of God, but also when a commanded Worship is not discharged in the appointed Manner: Therefore, O how few true Worshippers will the Father find? True Worship must have *Truth*, for the Substance; and *Spirit*, for the Manner of it: Else it is

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not such a Worship as the Father seeks and will be pleased with; Divine Worship, must have *Truth* in it, that is plain, but what was that *Truth?* it must be conformed to the Rule and Pattern of Worship, which is God's Will and Pleasure, revealed in the Word of Truth. True Worship is the very Practice of the Word of Truth, it carries the Image and Superscription of a Command upon it, which is a necessary Ingredient in it, and Constituent of it. Therefore if thy Service have the Image of thy own Will stamped on it, it is not Divine Worship, but Will-worship. Thus all humane Ceremonies and Ordinances enjoyned for the Service of God, carry the Inscription not of God, but of Man, who is the Author and Original of them, and so are but adulterated and false Coin, that will not pass current with God. I fear there be many Rites and vain Customs among ignorant People, in which they place some Religion, which have no Ground in the Word of God, but are only old Wives Fables and Traditions. How many Things of that Nature are used upon a religious Account in which God hath placed no Religion: Many have a superstitious Conceit of the Publick Place of Worship, as if there were more Holiness in it than in any other House, and so they think their Prayers in the Church are more acceptable than in their Chamber; but Christ refutes that superstitious Opinion of Places, and so consequently of Days, Meats, and all such external Things: The *Jews* had a great Opinion of their Temple, the *Samaritans* of their Mountain, as if these Places had sanctified their Services: But saith our Lord, *Vers.* 21. *The Hour cometh when ye shall neither worship in this Mountain*, &c. but 'tis any where acceptable, if so be ye worship in Spirit and Truth: Many of you account it Religion, to pray and mutter Words of your own in the Time of publick Prayer, but who hath required this at your Hands? If ye would pray your selves, go apart, *shut the Door behind thee*, saith Christ: Private Prayer should be in private and secret: But when publick Prayer is, your Hearts should close with the Petitions, and offer them up jointly to God. It is certainly a great slight of that deceitful Destroyer, the Devil, to possess your Minds with an Opinion of Religion, in such vain Bablings, that he may withdraw both your Ears and your Hearts, from the publick Worship of God, for when every one is busied with his own Prayers, you cannot at all join in the publick Service of God, which is offered up in your Name. The like I may say of stupid Forms of Prayer, and tying your selves to a Platt-form, written in a Book, or to some certain Words gotten by the Heart, who hath commanded this? Sure, not the Lord, who hath promised His Spirit to teach them to pray, and help their Infirmities, who know not how, nor what to pray: It is a Device of your own, invented by Satan to quench the Spirit of Supplication, which should be the very natural breathing of a Christian. But there are some so grosly ignorant of what Prayer is, that they make use of the Ten Commands, and Belief, as a Prayer: So void are they of the Knowledge and Spirit of God, that they cannot discern betwixt God's Commands to themselves and their own Requests to God, betwixt His speaking to Men, and their speaking to Him, between their professing of Him before Men, and praying and confessing to Him; all this is but forged imaginary Worship, Worship falsly so called, which the Father seeks not, and receives not.

But what if I should say, that the most Part of your Worship, even that which is commanded of God, as Prayer, Hearing, Reading,

Reading, &c. hath no Truth in it, I should say nothing amiss, for though you do those Things that are commanded, yet not as commanded, without any respect to Divine Appointment, and only because you have received them as Traditions from your Fathers, and because ye are taught so by the Precepts of Men, and are accustomed so to do, therefore the Stamp of God's Will and Pleasure is not engraven on them, but of your own Will, or of the Will of Men. Let me pose your Consciences, many of you, what Difference is there between your Praying, and your Plowing, between your Hearing, and your Harrowing, between your Reading in the Scriptures, and your reaping in the Harvest, between your religious Service and your common ordinary Actions; I say, what Difference is there in the Rise of these? You do many civil Things out of Custom, or because of the Precepts of Men; and is there any any other Principle at the Bottom of your religious Performances? Do you at all consider, these are Divine Appointments, these have a Stamp of His Authority on them; and from the Conscience of such an immediate Command of God, and the Desire to please Him and obey Him, do you go about these? I fear many cannot say it. O am I sure all cannot, though it may be, all will say it: Therefore your religious Worship can come in no other Account, than Will-worship, or Man-worship, it hath not the Stamp of Truth on it, an express Conformity to the Truth of God as His Truth.

But we must press this out a little more. Truth is opposed to Ceremony and Shadow. The Ceremonies of old were Shadows, or the external Body of Religion, in which the Soul and Spirit of Godliness should have been enclosed, but the Lord did always urge more earnestly the Substance and Truth, than the Ceremony; the weightier Matters of the Law, Piety, Equity, and Sobriety, than these lighter external Ceremonies: He sets an higher Account upon Mercy than Sacrifice, and upon Obedience, than Ceremonies: But this People turned it just contrary, they summed up all their Religion in some ceremonial Performance, and separated those Things, God had so nearly conjoyned; they would be devout Men in Offering Sacrifices, in their Washings, in their Rites, and yet made no Conscience of Heart and Soul-piety towards God, and upright just Dealing with Men: Therefore the Lord so often quarrels with them; and rejects all their Service as being a Device and Invention of their own, which never entered into His Heart, *Isa.* i. from 10. to 16, *Jer.* vii. throughout, *Isa.* lxvi. to 6. *Isa.* xxviii. Now if you will examine it impartially it is even just so with us; there are some external Things in Religion, which in Comparison with the weightier Things of Faith and Obedience are but ceremonial; in these you place the most Part, if not all your Religion, and think your selves good Christians, if you be baptized, and hear the Word, and partake of the Lord's Table, and such like, though in the mean Time you be not given to secret Prayer, and Reading, and do not inwardly judge and examine your selves, that ye may flee unto a Mediator; though your Conversation be unjust and scandalous among Men: I say unto such Souls, as the Lord to the *Jews*, *Who hath required this at your Hands?* Who commanded you to hear the Word, to be baptized, to wait on publick Ordinances? Away with all this, it is Abomination to His Majesty; though it please you never so well, the more it displeases Him; If you say, Why com-

commands He us to hear? &c. I say, the Lord never commanded these external Ordinances for the Sum of true Religion; that was not the great Thing which was in His Heart, that He had most Pleasure unto, but the weightier Matters of the Law, Piety, Equity, and Sobriety, a Holy and godly Conversation adorning the Gospel: *What hath the Lord required of thee, but this, O Man, To do justly, and walk humbly with thy God?* So then, thou dost not worship Him in *Truth*, but in a Shadow; the *Truth*, is Holiness and Righteousness; that external Profession is but a Ceremony; while you separate these external Ordinances from these weighty Duties of Piety and Justice, they are but as a dead Body without a Soul. If the Lord required Truth of old, much more now, when He hath abolished the Multitude of Ceremonies, that the great Things of his Law may be more seen and loved.

If you would then be true Worshippers, look the whole Mind of God, and especially the chief Pleasure of God's Mind, that which He most delights in; and by any Means do not separate what God hath conjoyned; do not divide Righteousness towards Men from a Profession of Holiness to God, else it is but a Falshood, a counterfeit Coin; do not please your selves so much in external Church-privileges, without a Holy and Godly Conversation, adorning the Gospel; but let the chief Study, Endeavour, and Delight of your Souls be about that which God most delights in; let the Substantials of Religion have the first Place in the Soul, pray more in secret, that will be the Life of your Souls; you ought, indeed, to attend publick Ordinances, but above all, take heed to your Conversation and walking at Home, and in Secret; Prayer in your Family is a more substantial Worship than to sit and hear Prayer in publick; and Prayer in secret is more substantial than that: The more retired and immediate a Duty be the more weighty it is; the more it cross thy Corruptions, and evidences the Stamp of God on thy Affections, the more Divine it is; and therefore to serve God in these, is to serve Him in *Truth*. Practice hath more of Truth in it than a Profession: *When your Fathers executed Judgment, was not this to know me?* Duties that have more Opposition from our Natures against them, and less Fewel or Oyl to feed the Flame of our Self-love and Corruption, have more Truth in them; and if you should worship God in all other Duties, and not especially in those, you do not worship Him in *Truth*.

Next, Let us consider the Manner of Divine Worship: And this is as needful to true Worship as true Matter, that it be commanded, and done as it is commanded, that compleats true Worship. Now, I know no better Way, or Manner, to worship God in than so to worship Him as our Worship may carry the Stamp of His Image upon it, as it may be a Glass wherein we may behold God's Nature and Properties: For such as Himself is, such He would be acknowledged to be. I would think it were true Worship indeed, which had engraven on it the Name of the True and Living God, if it did speak out so much, of it self, *That God is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that seek Him diligently.* Most Part of our Service speaks an unknown God, and carries such an Inscription upon it, *To the unknown God*: There is so little either Reverence, or Love, or Fear, or Knowledge in it, as if we did not worship the true God, but an Idol. It is said, that the Fool *says in his Heart, that there is no God*, because his Thoughts and Affections, and Actions are so little composed to the Fear and Likeness of that God, as if

if he did indeed plainly deny Him ; I fear, it may be said thus of our Worship. It says, *There is no God* ; it is of such a Nature, that none could conclude from it, that it had any Relation to the true God ; our Prayers deny God, because there is nothing of God appears in them : But this is true Worship, when it renders back to God His own Image and Name : *Unde repercussus redditur ipse sibi.* As it is a pure and clean Fountain, in which a Man may see his Shadow distinctly, but a troubled Fountain or Myre in which he cannot behold himself ; so it is pure Worship, which receives and reflects the pure Image of God, but impure and unclean Worship, which cannot receive it, and return it. I pray you Christians consider this, for it is such Worshippers the Father seeks ; and why seeks He such? but because in them He finds Himself (so to speak :) His own Image and Superscription is upon them, His Mercy is engraven on their Faith and Confidence ; His Majesty and Power is stamped on their Humility and Reverence ; His Goodness is to be read on the Soul's rejoycing, His Greatness and Justice in the Soul's trembling. Thus there ought to be some Engravings on the Soul, answering the Characters of His glorious Name : O how little of this is among them that desire to know something of God? How little true Worship, even among them whom the Father hath sought out to make true Worshippers? But alas! How are all of us unacquainted with this kind of Worship? We stay upon the first Principles and Practices of Religion, and go not on to build upon the Foundation : Sometimes your Worship hath a Stamp of God's Holiness and Justice in Fear and Terror at such a Majesty, which makes you to tremble before Him ; but where is the Stamp of His Mercy and Grace which should be written in your Faith and Rejoycing? Tremble and fear indeed, but rejoyce with trembling, because there is Mercy with Him : Sometime there is Rejoycing and Quietness in the Soul, but that quickly degenerates into carnal Confidence, and makes the Soul turn Grace into Wantonness, and esteem of it self above what is right, because it is not counterpoised with the Sense and Apprehension of His Holiness and Justice ; But, O to have these jointly written on the Heart, in Worship, Fear, Reverence, Confidence, Humility, and Faith! That is a rare Thing : It is a Divine Composition and Temper of Spirit that makes a Divine Soul : For the most Part, our Worship savours and smells nothing of God, neither His Power, nor His Mercy and Grace, nor his Holiness and Justice, nor His Majesty and Glory ; a secure, faint, formal Way, void of Reverence, of Humility, of Fervency, and of Faith. I beseech you, let us consider, as before the Lord, how much Pains and Time we lose, and please none but our selves, and profit none at all : Stir up your selves as in his Sight ; for it is the keeping of our Souls continually as in His Sight, which will stamp our Service with His Likeness ; The fixed and constant Meditation on God and His glorious Properties, this will beget the Resemblance between our Worship, and the God whom we worship, and it will imprint His Image upon it, and then it should please Him, and then it should profit thee, and then it should edifie others.

But more particularly : True Worship must have the Stamp of God's spiritual Nature, and be conformed to it in some Measure, else it cannot please Him : There must be a Conformity between God and Souls ; this is the great End of the Gospel, to repair that Image of God which was

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once upon Man, and make him like God again; Now, it is this Way that Jesus Christ repairs this Image, and brings about the Conformity with God; by the Soul's worshipping of God suitable to His Nature, which as it grows more and more suitable to God's Nature, it is the more and more like God, and happy in that Likeness. Now, *God is a Spirit*, therefore (saith Christ) you *must worship Him in Spirit and Truth*. The Worship then of Saints must be of a spiritual Nature, that it may be like the immortal Divine Spirit: It is such Worshippers the Father seeks; He seeks Souls to make them like Himself, and this Likeness and Conformity to God is the very Foundation of the Soul's Happiness, and eternal Refreshment.

This is a Point of great Consequence, and I fear, not laid to Heart. The Worship must be like the worshipped. It is a Spirit must worship the eternal Spirit, it is not a Body that can be the Principle and chief Agent in the Business: What Communion can God have with your Bodies, while your Souls are removed far from Him, more than with Beasts? All Society and Fellowship must be between those that are like one another: A Man can have no comfortable Company with Beasts, or with Stones, and Trees; it is Men that can converse with Men; and a Spirit must worship the Self-being Spirit. Do not mistake this, as if under the Days of the Gospel we were not called to an external and bodily Worship, to any Service to which our outward Man is instrumental; that is one of the deep Delusions of this Age, into which some Men, *reprobate concerning the Faith*, have fallen, that there should be no external Ordinances but that Christians are now called to a Worship, all Spirit, pure Spirit, &c. This is one of the Spirits, and spiritual Doctrines (that calls themselves so) which ye must not receive; for it is neither the Spirit of God, nor of Christ that teacheth this: Not the Spirit of God the Creator, because He hath made the whole Man, Body and Soul, and so must be worshipped of the whole Man: He hath created Man in such a Capacity as he may offer up external Actions in a reasonable Manner with the inward Affections; as the Lord hath created, him so should he serve Him. Every Member, every Part in its own Capacity; the Soul to preceed, and the Body to follow; the Soul to be the chief Worshipper, and the Body its Servant imployed in the Worship: True Worship hath a Body and a Soul as well as a true Man; and as the Soul separated is not a compleat Man, so neither is the Soul separated a compleat Worshipper without the Body; the external Ordinances of God is the Body, the inward Soul-affection is the Spirit, which being joined together makes compleat Worship. Neither is it the Spirit of Christ which teacheth this, because our Lord Jesus hath taught us to offer up our Bodies and Spirits both in a reasonable Service, *Rom.* xii. 1, 2. The Sacrifice of the bodily Performance, offered up by the spiritual Affection, and renewed Mind *is a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable, and reasonable*: That Spirit which dwelt in Christ above Measure, did not think it too base to vent it self in the Way of external Ordinances; He was, indeed, above all, above the Law, yet did willingly come under them, to teach us, who have so much Need and Want, to come under them; He prayed much, He preached, He did sing and read, to teach us how to worship, and how much Need we have of Prayer and Preaching: This was not the Spirit Christ promised to His Disciples, and Apostles, which Spirit did

breathe

breathe most lively in the Use of external Ordinances, all their Days; and this is not the Spirit which was at that Hour in which Christ spoke, *the Hour is come and now is*, Ver. 23. *in which the true Worship of God* shall not be in the external *Jewish* Ceremonies, and Rites, void of all Life and inward Sense of Piety; but the true Worship of God shall be made up of a Soul and Body, of Spirit and Truth, of the external appointed Ordinances according to the Word of Truth, and the Spirit of Truth; and of the Spirit and inward Soul-affection, and Sincerity, which shall quicken and actuate that external Performance: There were no such Worshippers then as had no Use of Ordinances, Christ was not such, His Disciples were not such, therefore it is a new Gospel, which if an Angel should bring from Heaven ye ought not to receive it.

As it is certain then, that both Soul and Body must be imployed in this Business, so it is sure that the Soul and Spirit must be the first Mover, and chiefest Agent in it, because it is a spiritual Business, and hath Relation to the Fountain-spirit, which hath the most perfect Opposition to all false Appearances, and external Shews; that Part of Man that cometh neareſt God, must draw neareſt in worshipping God, and if that be removed far away, there is no reall Communion with God; Man judges according to the outward Appearance, and can reach no further than the outward Man, but God is an all-searching Spirit who tryeth the Heart and Reins, and therefore He will pass another Judgment upon your Worship, than Men can do, because He observes all the secret Wanderings and Escapes of the Heart out of His Sight. He misses the Soul when you present attentive Ears, or eloquent Tongues; there is no dallying with His Majesty, painting will not deceive Him, His very Nature is contrary to Hypocrisy, and Dissimulation; and what it is but Dissimulation, when you present your selves to religious Exercises as His People, but within are nothing like it, nothing awaking, nothing present? O consider, my Beloved, what a One you have to do with! It is not Men, but the Father of Spirits, who will not be pleased with what pleases Men, of your own Flesh, but must have a Spirit to serve Him. Alas what are we doing with such empty Names and Shews in Religion? Busied in the Outside of Worship only, as if we had none to do with but Men who have Eyes of Flesh; all that we do in this Kind is lost Labour, and will never be reckoned up in the Account of true Worship: I am sure you know and may reflect upon your selves, that you make Religion but a Matter of outward Fashion, and external Custom, you have never almost taken it to Heart in earnest; you may frequent the Ordinances, you may have a Form of Godliness, consisting in some outward Performances and Privileges, and O! How void and destitute of all Spirit and Life, and Power? Not to speak of the Removal of Affection, and the imploying of the Marrow of your Soul upon base Lusts, and Creatures, or the scattering of your Desires abroad amongst them, for that is too palpable; but even your very Thoughts and Minds are removed from this Business, you have nothing present but an Ear, or Eye, and your Minds is about other Business, your Desires, your Fears, your Joys, and Delights, your Affections never did run in the Channel of religious Exercises; all your Passion is vented in other Things: But here you are blockish and stupid, without any sensible Apprehension of God, His Mercy, or Justice, or Wrath,

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or of your own Miſery and Want. You ſorrow in other Things, but none here, none for Sin; you joy for other Things, but none here, you cannot rejoice at the Goſpel. Prayer is a Burden not a Delight, if your Spirits were chiefly imployed in religious Duties, Religion would be almoſt your Element, your Pleaſure and Recreation, but now it is weariſome to the Fleſh, becauſe the Spirit taketh not the chief Weight upon it. Oh! be not deceived, God is not mocked, you do but mock your ſelves with external Shows, while you are ſatisfied with them. I beſeech you look inwardly, and be not ſatisfied with the outward Appearance, but ask at thy Soul, where it is? and how it is? Retire within, and bring up thy Spirit to this Work; I am ſure you may obſerve that any Thing goes more ſmoothly and ſweetly with you, than the Worſhip of God, becauſe your Mind is more upon any Thing elſe. I fear the moſt Part of us who endeavour, in ſome Meaſure, to ſeek God, have too much Droſs of outward Formality, and much Scum of filthy Hypocriſy and Guile. O! pray, that the preſent Furnace may purge away this Scum. It is the great Ground of God's preſent Controverſy with *Scotland*; but, alas, the Bellows are like to burn, and we not to be purged, our Scum goes not out from us, we ſatisfie our ſelves with ſome outward Exerciſes of Religion, Cuſtom undoes us all, and it was never more undoing than when Indignation and Wrath is purſuing it. Oh! that you would ponder what you loſe by it, both the Sweetneſs and Advantage of Godlineſs, beſide the Diſhonour of God. You take a formal, negligent and ſecure Way, as the moſt eaſy Way, and the moſt pleaſing to your Fleſh, and I am perſwaded you find it the moſt difficult Way, becauſe you want all the pleaſant and ſweet Refreſhments and Soul Delights you might have in God, by a ſerious and diligent minding of Religion. The Pleaſure and Sweetneſs of God taſted and found, will make Diligence and Pains more eaſy, than Slothfulneſs can be to the Slothful; this oyles the Wheels, and makes them drive ſwiftly; Formality makes them drive heavily. Thus you live always in a complaining Humour, *ſighing, and going backward*, becauſe you have ſome ſtirring Principle of Conſcience within, which bears witneſs againſt you, and your formal Sluggiſh Diſpoſition on the other Hand, refuſes to awake and work; you are perplexed and tormented between theſe two, when thy Spirit and Affections goes one way, and thy Body another; when thy Conſcience drives on the Spirit, and thy Affections draws back, it muſt needs be an unpleaſant Buſineſs.

Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord.*
1 Joh. v. 7. *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe Three are one.*

GReat is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. Religion and true Godlineſs is a Bundle of excellent Myſteries, of Things hid from the World, yea, from the wiſe Men of the World, 1 *Cor.* ii. and not only ſo, but Secrets in their own Nature, the diſtinct Knowledge whereof is not given to Saints in this Eſtate of Diſ-

tance and Abſence from the Lord. There is almoſt nothing in Divinity, but it is a Myſtery in itſelf, how common ſoever it be in the Apprehenſions of Men: For it is Men's overlie, and common and ſlender Apprehenſions of them, which makes them look ſo commonly upon them: There is a Depth in them, but you will not know it, till you ſearch it, and ſound it, and the more you ſound, you ſhall find it the more profound: But there are ſome Myſteries ſmall, and ſome great, there is a Difference amongſt them, all are not of one Stature, of one Meaſure: The Myſtery of Chriſt's Incarnation, and Death, and Reſurrection, is one of the great Myſteries of Religion, *God manifeſted in the Fleſh*; yet I conceive there is a greater Myſtery than it, and of all Myſteries in Nature or Divinity I know none to this, the Holy Trinity, and it muſt needs be greateſt of all, and without Controverſy greateſt, becauſe it is the Beginning and End of all, *fons & finis omnium*; all Myſteries have their Riſe here, and all of them return hither. This is furtheſt removed from the Underſtandings of Men, what God himſelf is, for himſelf is infinitely above any Manifeſtation of himſelf: God is greater than God manifeſted in the Fleſh, though in that reſpect he be too great for us to conceive. There is a natural Deſire in all Men to know, and, if any Thing be ſecret and wonderful, the Deſire is more inflamed after the Knowledge of it, the very Difficulty or Impoſſibility of attaining it, inſtead of reſtraining the Curioſity of Man's Spirit, doth rather incenſe it. *Nitimur invetitum* is the Fruit, the ſad Fruit we plucked and eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. If the Lord reveal any Thing plainly in his Word to Men, that is deſpiſed and ſet at nought; becauſe it is plain, whereas the moſt plain Truths, which are beyond all Controverſy, are the moſt neceſſary, and moſt profitable for our eternal Salvation; but if there be any ſecret Myſtery in the Scriptures, which the Lord hath only pointed out more obſcurely to us, reſerving the diſtinct and clear underſtanding of it to himſelf, *Deut.* xxix. 26. that is the Apple which our accurſed Natures will long for, and catch after, though there be never ſo much Choice of excellent ſaving Fruit in the Paradiſe of the Scriptures beſides. If the Ark be covered to keep Men from looking into it, that doth rather provoke the curious Spirit of Man to pry into it, 1 *Sam.* vi. 19. If the Lord ſhew his wonderful Glory in the Mount, and charge his People not to come near, leſt the glorious Preſence of God kill them, he muſt put Raills about it, to keep them back, or elſe they will be meddling; ſuch is the unbridled Licence of our Minds, and the perverſe Diſpoſitions of our Natures, that where God familialy invites us to come, what he earneſtly preſſeth us to ſearch and know, that we deſpiſe as trivial and common: And what he compaſſeth about with a Divine Darkneſs of inacceſſible Light, and hath removed far from the Apprehenſions of all Living, that we will needs ſearch into, and wander into thoſe forbidden Compaſſes, with daring Boldneſs. I conceive, this holy and profound Myſtery, is one of thoſe Secrets which belongs to God to know; for *who knoweth the Father but the Son, or the Son but the Father*, or *who knoweth the Mind of God but the Spirit?* Yet the fooliſh Minds of Men will not be ſatisfied with the believing Ignorance of ſuch a Myſtery, but will needs enquire into thoſe Depths, that they may find Satisfaction for their Reaſon. But as it happeneth with Men who will boldly ſtare upon the Sun, their Eyes

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are dazled and darkned with its Brighness; or those that enter into a Labyrinth, which they can find no way to come out, but the further they go into it, the more perplexed it is, and the more intricate; even so, it befalls many unsober and presumptuous Spirits, who, not being satisfied with the simple Truth of God, clearly asserting that this is, endeavour to examine it according to Reason, and to solve all the Objections of carnal Wit and Reason, (which is often Enmity to God) not by the Silence of the Scriptures, but by Answers framed according to the several Capacities of Men; I say, all this is but daring to behold the infinite Glory of God with Eyes of Flesh, which makes them darkned in Mind, and vanishing in their Expressions, while they seek to behold this inaccessible Light; while they enter into an endless Labyrinth of Difficulties, out of which the Thread of Reason and Disputation can never extricate them or lead them forth. But the Lord has shewed us a more excellent Way, though it may be despicable to Men. Man did fall from Blessedness, by this curious and wretched Aim at some higher Happiness, and more Wisdom. The Lord hath chosen another Way to raise him up again by Faith, rather than Knowledge, by believing rather than disputing: Therefore the great Command of the Gospel is this, to receive with a ready and willing Mind, whatsoever the Lord saith to us, whatsoever it may appear to Sense and Reason; to dispute no more, to search no more into the Secret of Divine Mysteries, as if by searching we could find them out unto Perfection, but to believe what is spoken, *till the Day break, and the Shadows flee away*, and the Darkness of Ignorance be wholly dispelled, by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. We are called then to receive this Truth, that God is one, truly one, and yet there are Three in this one, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This I say you must believe, because the Wisdom of God saith it, though you know not how it is, or how it can be, though it seem a Contradiction in Reason, a *Trinity* in *Unity*, yet you must lead your Reason captive to the Obedience of Faith, and silence it with this one Answer, *The Lord hath said it.* If thou go on to dispute and to enquire, how can these Things be? Thou art escaped from under the Power of Faith, and art fled unto the Tents of humane Wisdom, where thou mayest learn *Atheism*, but no Religion; *For the World through Wisdom knew not God*, 1 Cor. i. And certainly, whoever he be that will not quiet his Conscience, upon the bare Word of Truth in this Particular, but will call in for the Help of Reason and Disputation, how to understand and maintain it, I think he shall be further from the true Knowledge of God, and Satisfaction of Mind than before. There is no Way here, but to flee into *Paul*'s Sanctuary, *Who art thou, O Man that disputes?* Whenever thou thinks within thy self, how may this be, how can One be Three, and Three One, then withal let this of *Paul* sound in thine Ears, *Who art thou, O Man, who disputes?* Think that thou art Man, think that he is God. Believing Ignorance is much better, than rash and presumptuous Knowledge. Ask not a Reason of these Things, but rather adore and tremble at the Mystery and Majesty of them. Christianity is Foolishness to the World upon this Account, because 'tis an implicite Faith (so to speak) given to God; but there is no Fear of being deceived, though *be lead the blind by a Way thou know not*, yet he cannot lead thee wrong. This holy Simplicity in believing every Word of God, and trusting without more trying by

Diſputation, is the very Character of Chriſtianity, and it would be found only true Wiſdom; for if any will become wiſe, he muſt be a Fool in Mens Account; that he may be wiſe, he muſt quit his Reaſon to learn true Religion, which indeed is a more excellent and Divine Reaſon; neither is it contrary to it, though it be high above it.

In this Place of *Moſes*, you have the Unity of God aſſerted, *the Lord thy God is one Lord*; and that is indeed engraven on the very Hearts of Men by Nature, that God is one: For all may know, that the common Notion and Apprehenſion of God, is, That he is a moſt perfect Being, the Original of all Things, moſt Wiſe, moſt Powerful, and Infinite in all Perfections. Now common Reaſon may tell any Man, that there can be but one Thing moſt Perfect and Excellent, there can be but one Infinite, one Almighty, one Beginning and End of all, one firſt Mover, one firſt Cauſe, of whom are all Things, and who is of none.

Again, in this Place of *John*, ye have a Teſtimony of the bleſſed Trinity of Perſons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in that holy Unity of Eſſence; the great Point which *John* hath in Hand, is this Fundamental of our Salvation, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, in whom all our Confidence ſhould be placed, and upon whom we ſhould lean the Weight of our Souls; and this he proves by a two-fold Teſtimony, one out of Heaven, another in the Earth: There are Three bearing Witneſs to this Truth in Heaven, *the Father*, *the Word*, (that is, Jeſus Chriſt, the eternal Son of God, whom this Apoſtle calls the Word of God, or Wiſdom of God, *Jo.* i. 1.) *and the Holy Ghoſt*. The Father witneſſed to this Truth in an audible Voice out of Heaven, when Chriſt was baptized, *Mat.* iii. 17. *This is my well-beloved Son, hear ye him*; here's the Father's Teſtimony of the Son when he was baptized, which was given very ſolemnly in a great Congregation of People, and divinely, with great Glory and Majeſty from Heaven; as if the Heavens had opened upon him, and the inacceſſible Light of God had ſhined down on him, which was confirmed in the Transfiguration, *Mat.* xvii. 5. where the Lord gave a glorious Evidence, to the Aſtoniſhment of the Three Diſciples, how he did account of him, how all Saints and Angels muſt ſerve him; *Him hath God the Father ſealed*, ſaith *John*. Indeed, the Stamp of Divinity, of the Divine Image, in ſuch an excellent Manner upon the Man Chriſt, was a Seal ſet on by God the Father, ſignifying and confirming his Approbation of his well-beloved Son, and of the Work he was going about. Then the Son himſelf did give ample Teſtimony of this, this was the Subject of his preaching to the World, *I am the Light and Life of Men, he that believeth on me ſhall be ſaved*; and therefore he may be called *the Word of God, and the Wiſdom of God*, Joh. i. 1. *Pro.* viii. Becauſe he hath revealed unto us the bleſſed Myſtery of Wiſdom concerning our Salvation. He is the very Expreſſion and Character of the Father's Perſon and Glory, *Heb.* i. in his own Perſon, and he hath revealed and expreſſed his Father's Mind, and his own Office ſo fully to the World, that there ſhould be no more doubt of it. Out of the Mouth of theſe Two Witneſſes this Word might be eſtabliſhed: But, for Superabundance, behold a Third, the Holy Ghoſt witneſſing at his Baptiſm, in his Reſurrection, after his Aſcenſion, the Holy Ghoſt ſignifieth his Preſence and Conſent to that Work, in the Similitude of a Dove, the Holy Ghoſt teſtifieth it in

in the Power that raiſed him from the Dead, the Holy Ghoſt put it beyond all Queſtion, when he deſcended upon the Apoſtles according to Chriſt's Promiſe. For the other Three Witneſſes on Earth, we ſhall not ſtay upon it, only know, that the Work of the Regeneration of Souls, by the Power of the Word and Spirit ſignified by Water, the Juſtification of guilty Souls ſignified by the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and the Teſtimony of the Spirit in our Conſciences, bearing Witneſs to our Spirits, is an aſſured Teſtimony of this, That Jeſus Chriſt, in whom we believe, *is the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.* The changing, pacifying and comforting of Souls, in ſuch a wonderful Manner, cries aloud, That he in whom the Soul believes, is the true and living God, *whom to know is eternal Life.* But mark, I pray you, the Accuracy of the Apoſtle in the Change of Speech. Theſe Three Witneſſes on Earth (ſaith he) *agree in one*, in giving one common Teſtimony to the Son of God, and Saviour of Sinners. But as for the heavenly Witneſſes, the *Father*, the *Word*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, however they be Three, after an inconceivable Manner, and that they do alſo agree in one common Teſtimony to the Mediator of Men, yet moreover, *they are one*, they not only agree in one, but are one God, one ſimple undivided Self-Being Infinite Spirit, holden out to us in Three Perſons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, to whom be Praiſe and Glory.

Deut. vi. 4. and *Joh.* v. 7.

ALL Scripture is given by Inſpiration of God, and it is profitable for Inſtruction, for Direction, &c. There is no Refuſe in it: No ſimple and plain Hiſtory, but it tends to ſome Edification, no profound or deep Myſtery but it is profitable for Salvation. Whatſoever Secrets there be in the Myſteries of God, which is reſerved from us, though it be given us but to know in part, and darkly through a Vail: yet as much is given to us to know, as may make the *Men of God perfect in every good Work*: As much is given us to know, as may build us up to eternal Salvation; if there were no more Uſe of theſe deep Myſteries of the Holy Trinity, &c. but to ſilence all Fleſh, and reſtrain the unlimited Spirits of Men, and keep them within the Bounds of Sobriety and Faith, it were enough: That great Secret would teach as much by its Silence and Darkneſs, as the plainer Truths do by ſpeaking out clearly. O that this great Myſtery did compoſe our Hearts to ſome reverend and awful Apprehenſion of that God we have to do with, and did imprint in our Soul a more feeling Senſe of our Darkneſs and Ignorance: This were more Advantage than all the Gain of Light, or Increaſe of Knowledge, that can come from the Search of Curioſity: If Men would labour to walk in that Light they have attained, rather than curiouſly enquire after what they cannot know by Enquiry, they ſhould ſooner attain more true Light. If Men would ſet about the Practice of what they know, without doubt they would more readily come to a Reſolution

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and Clearneſs in doubtful Things. Religion is now turned into Queſtions and School Debates; Men begin to believe nothing, but diſpute every Thing, under a Pretence of ſearching for Light and Reſolution; but for the moſt part, while Men look after Light, they darken themſelves; and this is the righteous Judgment of the Lord upon the World, that doth not receive the Truth in Love, or walk in the Light of what they have already attained; therefore he gives Men up to wander in their Search into the dark Dungeons of human Wiſdom and Fancy, and to loſe what they have already. If thoſe Things which are without all Controverſy (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Tim.* iii. 16.) were indeed made Conſcience of, and embraced in Love and practiſed, it were beyond all Controverſy, that the moſt Part of preſent Controverſies would ceaſe: But it falls out with many, as with the Dog, that catching at a Shadow in the Water, loſt the Subſtance in his Teeth; ſo, they purſuing after new Diſcoveries in controverted Things, and not taking a Heart-hold and inward Grip of the ſubſtantial Truths of the Goſpel, which are beyond all Controverſy, do even loſe what they have. Thus, *Even that which they have not, is taken from them*, becauſe though they have it in Judgment, yet they have it not ſurely and ſolidly in Affection, that it may be holden. So, to this preſent Point, if we could learn to adore and admire this *Holy, Holy, Holy One*; If we could in Silence and Faith ſit down and wonder at this Myſtery, it would be more profitable to us, and make Way for a clearer Manifeſtation of God, than if we ſhould ſearch and enquire into all the Volumes that are written upon it, thinking by this Means to ſatisfie our Reaſon. I think there is more Profoundneſs in the Sobriety of Faith, than in the Depths of humane Wiſdom and Learning; when the Myſtery is ſuch an infinite Depth, O, but Mens Eloquence and Wiſdom muſt be ſhallow, far too ſhallow either to find it out, or unfold it.

But there is yet both more Inſtruction and Conſolation to be preſſed out of this Myſtery; and therefore, if you cannot reach it in it ſelf, O conſider what it concerns us, how we may be edified by it, for this is true Religion. Look upon that Place of *Moſes*, what is the great Inſtruction he draws from this Unity of God's Eſſence; V. 5. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart*; ſince God is one, then have no God but one, and that the true and living God; and this is the very firſt Command of God which flows as it were immediately from His abſolute Oneneſs and Perfection of Being: There is no Man but he muſt have ſome God, that is, ſomething whereupon he placeth his Affection moſt; every Man hath ſome one Thing he loves and reſpects beyond all other Things, ſome Lord and Maſter that commands him; therefore, ſaith Chriſt, *No Man can ſerve two Maſters*. Before a Man will want a God to love and ſerve, he will make them, and then worſhip them; yea, he will make himſelf, his Belly, his Back, his Honour, and Pleaſure, a God, and ſacrifice all his Affections, and Deſires, and Endeavours to theſe: The natural Subordination of Man to God, the Relation he hath as a Creature to a Creator, is the firſt and fundamental Relation, beyond all Reſpects to himſelf, or other Fellow-creatures. This is the proto-natural Obligation upon the Creature, therefore it ſhould have returned in a direct Line to His Majeſty all its Affections, and Endeavours: But Man's Fall from God hath made a wretched Throw, and Crook in the Soul, that it cannot look any more after Him, but bows downward towards Creatures below it, or bends

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inwardly towards it self, and so since the Fall Man hath turned his Heart from the true God, and set it upon Vanity, upon lying Vanities, upon base dead Idols, which can neither help him, nor hurt him; your Hearts are gone a whoring from God, O that ye would believe it; none of you will deny, but ye have broken all the Commands; yet such is the brutish Ignorance and Stupidity of the most Part, that you will not confess that, when it comes to Particulars; and especially, if you should be challenged for loving other Things more than God, or having other Gods besides the true God, you will instantly deny it, and that with an Asseveration and Aversation, God forbid that I have another God: Alas! this shews, that what you confess in the general is not believed in the Heart, but only is like the prating of Children, whom you may learn to say any thing. I beseech you consider, that what you give your Time, Pains, Thoughts, and Affections to, that is your God; you must give God all your Heart, and so retain nothing of your own Will if God be your God. But do ye not know that your Care, and Grief, and Desire, and Love, vents another Way, towards base Things? You know, that you have a Will of your own, which goeth quite contrary to His holy Will in all Things, therefore Satan hath bewitched you, and your Hearts deceive you, when they perswade you that you have had no other God but the true God. Christianity raises the Soul again, and advances it by Degrees to this Love of God, from which it had fallen; the Soul returns to its first Husband, from whom it went a whoring; and now the Stamp of God is so upon it, that it is changed into His Image and Glory; having tasted how good this one Self-sufficient Good is, it gladly and easily divorces from all other Lovers; it renounces former Lusts of Ignorance, and now begins to live in another; Love transplants the Soul into God, and in Him it lives, and with him it walks; It is true, this is done gradually, there is much of the Heart yet unbroken to this sweet and easie Yoke of Love, much of the corrupt Nature untamed, unreclaimed, yet so much is gained by the first Conversion of the Soul to God, that all is given up to Him in Affection and Desire; He hath the chief Place in the Soul, the Disposition of the Spirit hath some Stamp and Impression of his Oneness and Singularity; my Beloved is one: Though a Christian is not wholly rid of strange Lords, yet the Tye of Subjection to them is broken; they may often intrude by Violence upon him, but he is in an hostile Posture of Affection, and Endeavour against them. I beseech you since the Lord is One, and there is none beside Him. O, let this be engraven on your Hearts, that your inward Affections and outward Actions may express that one Lord to be your God, and none other beside Him: It is a great Shame and Reproach to Christians, that they do not carry the Stamp of the first Principle of Religion upon their walking, the Condition and Conversation of many declares how little Account they make of the true God; why do ye enslave your Souls to your Lusts, and the Service of the Flesh, if ye believe in this one God? Why do ye all Things to please your selves, if this one Lord be your one God? As for you the *Israel* of God who are called by Jesus Christ to partake with the Common-wealth of *Israel*, in the Covenant of Promises, hear I beseech you this, and let your Souls incline to it, and receive it: Your God is one Lord: Have, then, no other Lords over your Souls and Consciences; not your selves, not others,

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But in the next Place, Let us consider to what Purpose *John* leads such three Witnesses, that we may draw some Consolation from it. The Thing testified and witnessed unto, is the Ground-work of all a Christian's Hope and Consolation, that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, and Saviour of the World, one able to save to the utmost all that put their Trust in Him, so that every Soul that finds it self lost, and not able to subsist nor abide the Judgment of God, may Repose their Confidence in Him, and lay the Weight of their eternal Welfare upon his Death and Sufferings, with Assurance to find Rest and Peace in Him to their Souls. He is such a One as Faith may triumph in Him over the World, and all Things beside: A Believer may triumph in his Victory, and in the Faith of his Victory, over Hell, and Death, and the Grave; may overcome personally, *For this is our Victory over the World, even our Faith*, Ver. 4. And how could a Soul conquer by Faith, if he in whom it believes were not declared to be the Son of God with Power? There is nothing so mean and weakly as Faith in it self, 'tis a poor despicable Thing of it self, and that it sees, and that it acknowledges; yea, Faith is a very Act of its Self-denyal, 'tis a renouncing of all Help without and within it self, save only that which is laid on Christ Jesus; therefore it were the most unsuitable Mean of prevailing, and the most insufficient Weapon for gaining the Victory, if the Object of it were not the strong God, the Lord Almighty, from whom it derives and borrows all its Power and V rtue, either to pacifie the Conscience, or to expiate Sin, or to overcome the World. Oh consider Christians where the Foundation of your Hopes is situated, it is in the Divine Power of our Saviour, if he who declared so much Love and good Will to Sinners, by becoming so low, and suffering so much, have also all Power in Heaven and Earth, if He be not only Man near us, to make for us Boldness of Access, but God near God, to prevail effectually with God, then certainly He is *a sure Foundation laid in Zion, Elect and Precious*; He is an unmoveable Rock of Ages; whosoever trusts their Soul to Him shall not be ashamed. I am sure that many of you consider not this, that Christ Jesus, who was in due Time born of the Virgin *Mary*, and died for Sinners, is the Eternal Son of God, equal to his Father in all Glory and Power. O how would this make the Gospel a great Mystery to Souls, and the Redemption of Souls a precious and wonderfull Work, if it were considered. Would not Souls stand at this Anchor immoveable in Temptation, if their Faith were pitched on this sure Foundation, and their Hope cast upon this solid Ground: O know your Redeemer is strong and mighty, and none can pluck you out of his Hand, and Himself will cast none out that comes. If the Multitude of you believed this, you would not make so little Account of the Gospel that comes to you, and make so little of your Sins which behoved to be taken away by the Blood of God, and could be expiated by no other Propitiation, you would not think it so easie to satisfie God with some Words of Custom, and some publick Services of Form as you do, you would not for all the World deal with God alone without this Mediator: And being convinced of Sin (if you believed this solidly, that He in whom Forgiveness of Sin and Salvation is preached, is the same Lord God whom you hear in the Old Testament, who gave out the Law, and inspired the Prophets, the only begotten of the Father in a Way infinitely removed

moved from all created Capacities) you could not but find the Father well satisfied in Him, and find a sufficient Ransom in His Death and Doings to pacifie God, and to settle your Consciences.

But as the Thing testified is a Matter of great Consolation, so the Witnesses testifying to this Fundamental of our Religion; may be a Ground of great Encouragement to discouraged Souls. It is ordinary, that the Apprehensions of Christians takes up Jesus Christ as very lovely, and more loving than any of the Persons of the God-head, either the Father or the Holy Ghost; there are some Thoughts of Estrangedness and Distance of the Father, as if the Son did really reconcile and gain Him to love us, who before hated us, and upon this Mistake the Soul is filled with continual Jealousies and Suspicions of the Love of God: But observe, I beseech you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all of them first agreeing in one Testimony, the Father declares from Heaven, that he is abundantly well pleased with His Son, not only because he is His Son, but even in the Undertaking and Performing of that Work of Redemption of Sinners; It is therefore His most serious Invitation, and peremptory Command to all, to hear Him, and believe in Him, *Mat.* iii. 17. 1 *John* iii. 23. Nay, if we speak more properly, our Salvation it is not the Business of Christ alone, as we imagine it, but the whole God-head is interested in it deeply, and so deeply, that you cannot say, who loves it most, or likes it most. The Father is the very Fountain of it, his Love is the Spring of all, *God so loved the World, that he hath sent his Son.* Christ hath not purchased that eternal Love to us, but is rather the Gift, the free Gift of eternal Love. And therefore, as we have the Son delighting among the Sons of Men, *Prov* viii. and delighting to be imployed and to do his Will, *Psal.* xl. So we have the Father delighting to send His Son, and taking Pleasure in instructing Him, and furnishing Him for it, *Isa.* xlii. 1. And therefore Christ often professed that he was not about his own Work, but the Father's Work who sent Him, and that it was not His own Will, but His Father's He was fulfilling. Therefore we should not look upon the Head-spring of our Salvation in the Son, but rather ascend up to the Father, whose Love and Wisdom did frame all this: And thus we may be confident to come to the Father in the Son, knowing that it was the Love of the Father that sent the Son, though indeed we must come to Him only in the Son, in the Name of Christ, and Faith of Acceptation through a Mediator, not because the Mediator purchaseth his good Will, but because his Love and good Will only vents in His beloved Son Christ, and therefore He will not be known nor worshipped but in Him, in whom he is near Sinners, and reconciling the World to Himself. And then the Holy Ghost concurs in this Testimony, and as the Son had the Work of purchasing Rights and Interests to Grace and Glory, so the great Work of applying all these Privileges to Saints, and making them actually Partakers of the Blessings of Christ His Death, is committed in a special Way to the Holy Ghost, *I will send the Comforter,* &c. So then Father, Son, and Holy Ghost all agree in one, that Jesus Christ is a sure Refuge for Sinners, a Plank for Ship broken Men, a firm and sure Foundation to build everlasting Hopes upon; there is no Party dissenting in all the Gospel, the Business of the Salvation of lost Souls is concluded in this Holy Council of the Trinity with one Voice

as at first, all of them agreed to make Man, *Let us make Man:* So again, they agree to make him again, to restore him to Life in the second *Adam*. Whoever thou be that wouldst flee to God for Mercy, do it in Confidence, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are ready to welcome thee, all of one Mind to shut out none, to cast out none. But to speak properly, it is but one Love; one Will, one Council, and Purpose in the Father, Son, and Spirit, for these three are One, and not only agree in one, they are One, and what one loves or purposes, all love and purposes. I would conclude this Matter with a Word of Direction how to worship God, which I cannot express in fitter Terms than these of *Nazianzen. I cannot think upon one, but by and by I am compassed about with the Brightness of three, and I cannot distinguish three, but I am suddenly driven back unto one:* There is great Ignorance and Mistake of this even amongst the best Christians, the grosser Sort when they hear of one God only, think Christ but some eminent Man, and so direct their Prayers to God only, excluding the Son, and Holy Ghost; or when they hear of three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they straightway divide their Worship, and imagine a Trinity of Gods; And, I fear, those of us who know most, use not to worship God as he hath revealed Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and yet one God: Our Minds are reduced to such a simple Unity, as we think upon one of them alone, or else distracted and divided into such a Plurality, that we worship in a manner three Gods instead of one. It is a great Mystery to keep the right middle Way. Learn, I beseech you, so to conceive of God, and so to acknowledge Him, and pray to Him, as you may do it in the Name of Jesus Christ, that all the Persons may have equal Honour, and all of them one Honour; that while you consider one God, you may adore that sacred and blessed Trinity, and while you worship that Holy Trinity, you may straight way be reduced to an Unity. To this wonderful and Holy One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Praise and Glory.

Eph. i. 11. latter Part. *Who worketh all Things after the Counsel of His own Will.*

Job xxiii. 13. *He is in one Mind, and who can turn Him,* &c?

HAving spoken something before of God, in His Nature, and Being, and Properties, we come in the next Place to consider His glorious Majesty as He stands in some nearer Relation to His Creatures, the Work of his Hands: For we must conceive the first Rise of all Things in the World, to be in this Self-being, the first Conception of them to be in the Womb of God's everlasting Purpose and Decree, which, in due Time, according to His Appointment, brings forth the Child of the Creature to the Light of actual Existence and Being: It is certain, that His Majesty might have endured for ever, and possessed Himself without any of these Things: If He had never resolved to create any Thing without Himself, He had been blessed then, as now, because of His full and absolute Self-

sufficient

ſufficient Perfection. His purpoſing to make a World, and His doing of it, adds nothing to His inward Bleſſedneſs and Contentment; this glorious and Holy One, incloſes within His own Being, all imaginable Perfections, in an infinite and tranſcendant Manner; that if you remove all created ones, you diminiſh nothing, if you add them all, you encreaſe nothing. Therefore it was the Superabundance of His Perfection, that He reſolved to ſhew His Glory thus in the World. It is the Creature's Indigence and limited Condition, which maketh it needful to go without its own Compaſs, for the Happineſs of its own Being: Man cannot be happy in loving Himſelf, He is not ſatisfied with His own intrinſick Perfections, but He muſt diffuſe Himſelf by His Affections and Deſires, and Endeavours, and, as it were, walk abroad upon theſe Legs, to fetch in Supply from the Creatures or Creator; The Creature is conſtrained out of ſome Neceſſity thus to go out of it ſelf, which ſpeaks much Indigence and Want within it ſelf: But it is not ſo with His Majeſty. His own glorious Being contents Him, His Happineſs is to know that, and delight in it, becauſe it comprehends in it ſelf all, that is at all poſſible, in the moſt excellent and perfect Manner that is conceivable; nay infinitely beyond what can be conceived by any but Himſelf; ſo He needs not go without Himſelf to ſeek Love or Delight, for it is all within Him, and it cannot be without His own Being, unleſs it flow from within Him, therefore ye may find in Scripture what Complacency God hath in Himſelf, and the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father: We find, *Prov.* viii. how the Wiſdom of God, our Lord Jeſus, was the Father's Delight from all Eternity, and the Father again His Delight, *for He rejoiced always before Him, Ver.* 30. And this was an all-ſufficient Poſſeſſion that one had of another, *Ver.* 22. the Love between the Father and the Son is holden out as the firſt Pattern of all Loves and Delights, *John* xvii. 23, 24. This then flows from the infinite Exceſs of Perfection and Exundance of Self-being, that His Majeſty is pleaſed to come without Himſelf, to manifeſt His own Glory in the Works of His Hands, to decree and appoint other Things beſide Himſelf, and to execute that Decree.

We may conſider in theſe Words ſome Particulars for our Edification, 1. That the Lord hath from Eternity purpoſed within Himſelf, and decreed to manifeſt His own Glory in the making and ruling of the World, that there is a Counſel and Purpoſe of His Will which reaches all Things, which have been, are now, or are to be after this. This is clear, for *He works all Things according to the Counſel of His own Will.* 2. That his Mind and Purpoſe is one Mind, one Counſel: I mean not only *One for ever*, that is, perpetual, and unchangeable, as the Words ſpeak, but alſo *One for all*; that is, with one ſimple Act or Reſolution of His holy Will He hath determined, all theſe ſeveral Things, all their Times, their Conditions, their Circumſtances. 3. That whatſoever He hath from all Eternity purpoſed, He in Time practiſeth it, and comes to Execution and working, ſo that there is an exact Correſpondence betwixt His Will and His Work, His Mind and His Hand, *He works according to the Counſel of His Will, and whatſoever His Soul deſireth, that He doth.* 4. That His Purpoſe and Performance, is infallible, irreſiſtible by any created Power, Himſelf will not change it, *for He is in one Mind*, and none elſe can hinder it, *for who can turn Him?* He deſireth

and He doth it, as in the Original, there is nothing intervenes between the Desire and the Doing, that can hinder the Meeting of these two.

The first is the constant Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, of which ye should consider four Things, 1. That His Purpose and Decree is most wise; therefore *Paul* cries out upon such a Subject, *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God*, Rom. xi. 33. His Will is always one with Wisdom, therefore you have the Purpose of His Will mentioned thus [*the Counsel of his Will*,] for His Will (as it were) takes Counsel and Advice of Wisdom, and discerns according to the Depth and Riches of His Knowledge and Understanding. We see among Men these are separated often, and there is nothing in the World so disorderly, so unruly and uncomely, as when Will is divided from Wisdom; when Men follow their own Will and Lusts as a Law, against their Conscience, that is monstrous: The Understanding and Reason are the Eyes of the Will, if if these be put out, or if a Man leave them behind him, he cannot but fall into a Pit. But the Purposes of God's Will are Depths of Wisdom, nay, His very Will is a sufficient Rule and Law; so that it may be well used of Him, *stat pro ratione voluntas*, Rom. ix. 13, 14. If we consider the glorious Fabrick of the World, the Order established in it, the sweet Harmony it keepeth in all its Motions and Successions: O it must be a wise Mind and Counsel contrived it. Man now having the Idea of this World in his Mind, might fancy and imagine many other Worlds, bearing some Proportion and Resemblance to this: But if He had never seen nor known this World, He could never have imagined the thousand Part of this World, He could in no ways have formed an Image in His Mind of all those Different kinds of Creatures. Creatures must have some Example and Copy to look to; but what was His Pattern? *Who hath been His Counsellour to teach Him?* Rom. xi. 34. Who gave Him the first Rudiments or Principles of that Art? Surely none. He had no Pattern given Him, not the least Idea of any of these Things furnished Him; but it is absolutely and solely His own wise Contrivance. 2. This Purpose of God is most free and absolute, there is no Cause, no Reason why He hath thus disposed all Things, and not otherwise, as He might have done, but His own good Will and Pleasure. If it be so in a Matter of deepest Concerment, *Rom.* ix. 18. it must be so also in all other Things; we may find indeed many inferior Causes, many peculiar Reasons for such and such a way of Administration, many Ends and Uses for which they serve, for there is nothing that His Majesty hath appointed, but it is for some Use and Reason, yet we must rise above all these, and ascend into the Tower of His most high Will and Pleasure, which is founded on a Depth of Wisdom, and from thence we shall behold all the Order, Administration and Use of the Creatures to depend. And herein is a great Difference between His Majesty's Purposes and ours; you know there is still something presented under the Notion of good and convenient, that moves our Will, and inclines us for its own Goodness to seek after it, and so to fall upon the Means to compass it; therefore the End which we propose to our selves hath its Influence upon our Purposes, and pleasures them, so that from it the Motion seems to proceed first, and not so much from within; but there is no created Thing can thus determine His Majesty. Himself, His own Glory

Glory is the great End, which he loves for it ſelf, and for which He loves other Things: But among other Things, though there be many of them ordained one for another's Uſe, yet His Will and Pleaſure is the Original of that Order; He doth not find it, but makes it: You ſee all the Creatures below are appointed for Man, as their immediate and next End, for His Uſe and Service; but was it Man his Goodneſs and Perfection which did move, and incline His Majeſty to this Appointment? No indeed, but of His own good Will He makes ſuch Things ſerve Man, that all of them together may be for His own Glory. 3. The Lord's Decree is the firſt Riſe of all Things that are, or have been, or are to come; This is the firſt Original of them all, to which they muſt be reduced as their Spring and Fountain. All of you may underſtand that there are many Things poſſible, which yet actually will never be; The Lord's Power and Omnipotency is of a further Extent than His Decree and Purpoſe; His Power is Natural and Eſſental to His Being. His Decree is of choice and voluntary: The Father could have ſent a Legion of Angels to have delivered His Son, the Son could have asked them, but neither of them would do it, *Mat.* xxvi. 53. The Lord could have raiſed up Children to *Abraham* out of Stones, but He would not, *Mat.* iii. His Power then comprehends within its Reach all poſſible Things which do not in their own Nature, and proper Conception, imply a Contradiction, ſo that infinite Worlds of Creatures more perfect than this, Numbers of Angels and Men above theſe, and Creatures in Glory ſurpaſſing them again, are within the Compaſs of the boundleſs Power, and Omnipotency of God: But yet for all this it might have fallen out, that nothing ſhould actually and really have been, unleſs His Majeſty had of His own free Will decreed what is, or hath been, or is to be. His Will determines His Power, and, as it were, puts it in the neareſt Capacity to act, and exerciſe it ſelf: Here then we muſt look for the firſt Beginning of all Things that are; they are conceived in the Womb of the Lord's everlaſting Purpoſe: As he ſpeaks, *Zeph.* ii. 2. the Decree is, as it were, with Child of Beings, *Iſa.* xliv. 7. It's God's Royal Prerogative to appoint Things to come, and none can ſhare with him in it: From whence is it, I pray you, that of ſo many Worlds which His Power could have framed, this one is brought to Light? Is it not becauſe this one was formed (as it were) in the Belly of His eternal Counſel and Will? From whence is it that ſo many Men are, and no more? That our Lord Jeſus was ſlain, when the Power of God might have kept Him alive? That thoſe Men, *Judas*, *&c.* were the Doers of it, when others might have done it? From whence are all thoſe Actions Good or Evil under the Sun, which He might have prevented? But from His good Will and Pleaſure, from His *determinate Counſel*, Acts iv. 28. Can you find the Original of theſe in the Creature, why it is thus, and why not otherwiſe? Can you conceive why, of all the infinite Numbers of poſſible Beings, theſe are, and no other? And, what hath tranſlated that Number of Creatures, which is, from the State of pure Poſſibility to Futurition or actual Being, but the deciſive Vote of God's everlaſting Purpoſe and Counſel? Therefore we ſhould always conceive, that the Creatures, and all their Actions, which have, or will have any Being in the World, have firſt had a Being in the Womb of God's Eternal Counſel, and that His Will and Pleaſure hath

hath paſt upon all Things that are, and are not; His Counſel has concluded of Things that have been, or will be, that thus they ſhall be; and His Counſel has determined of all other Things which are alſo poſſible, that they ſhall never come forth into the Light of the World, but remain in the dark Bowels of Omnipotency, that ſo we may give Him the Glory of all Things that are not, and that are at all. Then 4. We ſhould conſider the Extent of His Decree, and Counſel, it's paſt upon all Things, it's univerſal, reaching every Being or Action of the Univerſe. This is the Strain of the whole Scripture. He did not (as ſome dream) once create the Creatures in a good State, and put them in Capacity henceforth to preſerve themſelves, or exerciſe their own Vertue and Power, without Dependance on Him: As an Artificer makes an Horologe, and orders it in all Things, that it may do its Buſineſs without Him; He is not only a general Original of Action and Motion, as if He would command a River to flow by His appointed Channels; as if he did only work, and rule the World by Attorneys and Ambaſſadors; that is the Weakneſs and Infirmity of earthly Kings, that they muſt ſubſtitute Deputies for themſelves: But this King appoints all immediately, and diſpoſes upon all the particular Actions of His Creatures good or evil, and ſo He is univerſal abſolute Lord of the Creature, of its Being and Doing. It were a long Work to reheariſe what the Scripture ſpeaks of this Kind; but O that ye would read them oftner, and ponder them better, how there is nothing in this World (which may ſeem to fall out by Chance to you, that you know not how it is come to paſs, and can ſee no Cauſe nor Reaſon of it) but it falls out by the Holy Will of our bleſſed Father; Be it of greater or leſs Moment, or be it a Hair of thy Head fallen, or thy Head cut off; the moſt caſual and contingent Thing, though it ſurpriſed the whole World of Men and Angels, that they ſhould wonder from whence it did proceed, it is no Surpriſal to Him, for He not only knew it, but appointed it; the moſt certain and neceſſary Thing, according to the Courſe of Nature, it hath no Certainty, but from His Appoinment, who hath eſtabliſhed ſuch a Courſe in the Creatures, and which He can ſuſpend when He pleaſeth: Be it the Sin of Men and Devils, which ſeems moſt oppoſite to His Holineſs, yet even that cannot appear in the World of Beings, if it were not, in a holy, righteous, and permiſſive Way, firſt conceived in the Womb of His Eternal Counſel, and if it were not determined by Him for Holy and juſt Ends, *Acts* iv. 28.

The ſecond Thing propounded is, that His Mind and Counſel is one; one and the ſame, Yeſterday, and To-day, and for ever; therefore the Apoſtle ſpeaks of God, *That there is no Shadow of Change or turning in Him.* Jam. i. 17. *He is not a Man that He ſhould lie, or the Son of Man that He ſhould repent:* Will He ſay, and not do it? *Num.* xxiii. 19. And ſhall He decree, and not execute it? Shall he purpoſe, and not perform it? *I am God and change not*; that is His Name, *Mal.* iii. 6. The Counſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand, and the Thoughts of His Heart to all Generations, *Pſal.* xxxiii. 11. Men change their Mind oftner than their Garments; poor vain Man, even in his beſt Eſtate, is Changeableneſs, and Viciſſitude it ſelf, altogether Vanity; and this ariſeth, partly from the Imperfection of his Underſtanding, and his Ignorance, becauſe he does not underſtand what may fall out; there are many Things

Things ſecret and hidden, which if he diſcovered, he would not be of that Judgment; and many Things may fall out which may give Ground of another Reſolution; and partly from the Weakneſs and Perverſeneſs of his Will, that cannot be conſtant in any good Thing, and is not ſo cloſely united to it, as that no Fear or Terror can ſeparate from it; but there is no ſuch Imperfection in him, neither Ignorance, nor Weakneſs, *all Things are naked before Him*; all their Natures, their Circumſtances, all Events, all Emergents, *known to Him are they, and all His Works from the Beginning*, as perfectly as in the End; and therfore he may come to a fixed Reſolution from all Eternity, and being reſolved, He can ſee no Reaſon of Change, becauſe there can nothing appear after, which he did not perfectly diſcover from the Beginning, therefore, whenever ye read in the Scripture of the Lord's repenting, as *Gen.* vi. 7. and *Jer.* xvi. 8. ye ſhould remember that the Lord ſpeaks in our Terms, and like Nurſes with their Children, uſes our own Dialect, to point out to us our great Ignorance of His Majeſty, that cannot conceive more honourably of Him, nor more diſtinctly of our ſelves. When he changeth all Things about Him, He is not changed, for all theſe Changes were at once in His Mind; but when He changeth His outward Diſpenſation, He is ſaid to repent of what He is doing, becauſe we uſe not to change our Manner of Dealing, without ſome conceived Grief, or Repentance, and Change of Mind. When a Man goes to build a Houſe, he hath no mind but that it ſhould continue ſo, he hath not the leaſt Thought of taking it down again, but afterward it becomes ruinous, and his Eſtate enlarges, and then he takes a new Reſolution, to caſt it down to the Ground, and build a better; Thus it is with Man, according as he varies his Work, he changes his Mind. But it is not ſo with God: All theſe Changes of His Works, all the Succeſſions of Times, the Variation of Dealings, the Alteration of Diſpenſations in all Ages, were at once in His Mind, and all before Him; ſo that He never goes to build a Houſe, but He hath in His own Mind already determined all the Changes it ſhall be ſubject to: When He ſets up a Throne in a Nation, it is in His Mind within ſuch a Period to caſt it down again; when He lifts up Men in Succeſs and Proſperity, He doth not again change His Mind when He throws them down, for that was in His Mind alſo; ſo, that there is no Surpriſal of Him by any unexpected Emergent. Poor Man hath many Conſolations ere he come to a Concluſion; But it is not thus with His Counſel; of all theſe ſtrange and new Things which fall out in our Days, He hath one Thought of them all from Eternity; *He is one Mind*, and none of all theſe Things have put Him off His Eternal Mind, or put Him to a new Adviſement about His great Projects; Not only doth He not change His Mind, but His Mind and Thought is one, of all, and concerning all: Our poor, narrow and limited Minds, muſt part their Thoughts among many Buſineſſes, one Thought for this, another for that, and one after another: But with Him there is neither Succeſſion of Counſels and Purpoſes nor yet Plurality; but, as with one opening of His Eye, He beholds all Things as they are; ſo with one Inclination, or Nod of His Will He hath given a Law, and appointed all Things. If we can at one Inſtant, and one Look, ſee both Light and Colours, and both the Glaſs and the Shadow in it, and with one Motion of our Wills move towards the End, and the Means;

Means? O, how much more may He with one ſimple undivided Act of His good Will and Pleaſure paſs a Determination on all Things, in their Times, and Orders, and in His own Infinite and glorious Being perceive them all with one Look? How much Conſolation might redound from this to believing Souls? Hath the Lord appointed you to ſuffer Perſecution and Tribulation here? Hath he carved out ſuch a Lot unto you in this Life? Then withall conſider, that His Majeſty hath Eternal Glory wrapt up in the ſame Counſel, from which thy Afflictions proceed; hath He made thy Soul to melt before Him? Hath He convinced thee, and made thee to flee unto the City for Refuge, and expect Salvation from no other but Himſelf? Then know, that Life Eternal is in the Boſom of that ſame Purpoſe which gave thee to believe this; though the one be born before the other, yet the Decree ſhall certainly bring forth the other. And for ſuch Souls as upon this vain Preſumption of the Infallibility of God's Purpoſes, thinks it needleſs to give diligence in Religion, know, that it is one Mind and Purpoſe that hath linked the End and the Means together as a Chain, and therefore, if thou expecteſt to be ſaved, according to Election, thou muſt according to the ſame Counſel make thy Calling home from Sin to God, ſure.

Thirdly, What Thing ſoever He hath purpoſed, he in due Time applies to the Performance of it, and then the Counſel of His Will becomes the Work of His Hands, and there is an admirable Harmony and exact Agreement between theſe two: All Things come out of the Womb of his Eternal Decree, by the Work of his Power, even juſt faſhioned and framed, as their Lineaments and Draughts were proportioned in the Decree, nothing failing, nothing wanting, nothing exceeding; there is nothing in the Idea of His Mind but it is expreſſed in the Work of His Hands; there is no raw-half Wiſhes in God; Men have ſuch imperfect Deſires, I would have, or do, ſuch a Thing if it were not, &c. He wavers not thus in Suſpenſe, but what he wills and deſires, He wills and deſires indeed; He intends, doubtleſs, it ſhall be, and what he intends he will execute, and bring to paſs; therefore His Will in due Time applies Almighty Power to fulfill the Deſire of it; and Almighty Power being put to work by His Will, it cannot but work all Things acccording to the Counſel of His Will; and whatſoever His Soul deſireth, that He cannot but do, even as He deſires, ſeeing He can do it. If he will do it, and can do it, what hinders him to work and do? Know then, that His Commands and Precepts to you, ſignifying what is your Duty, they do not ſo much ſignifie what he deſires, or intends to work, or have done, as his Approbation of ſuch a Thing in itſelf to be your Duty; and therefore, though He have revealed his Will concerning our Duty, though no Obedience follow, yet is not his Intention fruſtrated or diſappointed; for his Commands to you ſay not what is his Intention about it, but what is that which he approves as good, and a Duty obliging Men: But whatſoever Thing he purpoſes and intends ſhould be, certainly, he will do it, and make it to be done: If it be a Work of his own Power alone, himſelf will do it alone; If he require the Concurrence of Creatures to it, as in all the Works of Providence, then he will effectually apply the Creatures to his Work, and not wait in ſuſpenſe on their Determination; If he have appointed ſuch an End to be attained by ſuch Means; If he have a Work to do by ſuch Inſtruments, then, without all Doubt, he will apply the In-

Inſtruments when his Time comes, and will not wait on their Concurrence. You ſee now ſtrange Things done, you wonder at them, how we are brought down from our Excellency? How our Land is laid deſolate by Strangers? How many Inſtruments of the Lord's Work are laid aſide? How he lifts up a Rod of Indignation againſt us, and is like to overturn even the Foundations of our Land? All theſe were not in our Mind before, but they were in His Mind from Eternity, and therefore he is now working it. Believe then that there is not a Circumſtance of all this Buſineſs, not one Point or Jot of it, but is even as it was framed and carved out of old; his preſent Works are according to an ancient Pattern, which he carries in his Mind; all the Meaſures and Degrees of your Affliction, all the Ounces and Grain Weights of your Cup, were all weighed in the Scales of his eternal Counſel, the Inſtruments, the Time, the Manner, all that is in it. If he change Inſtruments, that was in his Mind, if he change Diſpenſations, that was in his Mind alſo; and ſeeing ye know by the Scriptures that a bleſſed End is apppointed for the Godly, that all Things work for their Good, that all is ſubſervient to the Church's Welfare; ſeeing I ſay, you know his Purpoſe is ſuch as the Scripture ſpeaks, then believe his Performance ſhall be exact accordingly, nothing deficient, no Joint, no Sinew, in all his Work of Providence, no Line in all his Book and Volume of the Creature, but it was written in that ancient Book of his Eternal Counſel, and firſt faſhioned in that, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 16.

Then *Laſtly*, His Will is irreſiſtible, his Counſel ſhall ſtand, who can turn him from his Purpoſe, and who can hinder him from Performance? Therefore he attains his End, in the higheſt and moſt ſuperlative Degree of Certainty and Infallibility; Himſelf will not change his own Purpoſe, for why ſhould he do it; if he change to the better, then it reflects on his Wiſdom, if he change to the worſe, it reflects both on his Wiſdom and Goodneſs; certainly he can ſee no Cauſe why he ſhould change it: But as Himſelf cannot change, ſo none can hinder his Performance, for what Power think you, ſhall it be, that may attempt that? Is it the Power of Men, of ſtrong Men, of high Men, of any Men? No ſure, for their Breath is in their Noſtrils, they have no Power, but as He breathes in them; if he keep in his Breath, (as it were) they periſh, all Nations are as nothing before Him, and what Power hath nothing? Is it Devils may do it? No, for they cannot, though they would, He chains them, He limits them: Is it good Angels? They are powerful indeed, but they neither can, nor will reſiſt his Will. Let it be the whole Univerſity of the Creation, ſuppoſe all their ſcattered Force and Virtue conjoyned in one, yet it is all but finite, it amounts to no more, if you would eternally add unto it; but all Victory and Reſiſtance of this Kind, muſt be by a ſuperior Power, or at leaſt by an equal. Therefore we may conclude that there is no Impediment or Let, that can be put in his Way, nothing can obſtruct his Purpoſe, if all the World ſhould conſpire as one Man to obſtruct the Performance of any of his Promiſes and Purpoſes, they do but rage in vain, like Dogs barking at the Moon, they ſhall be ſo far from attaining their Purpoſe, that his Majeſty ſhall diſabuſe them (ſo to ſpeak) to his own Purpoſe, he ſhall apply them quite contrary to their own Mind, to work out the Counſel of his Mind? Here is the abſolute King, only worth the Name of a King and Lord, whom all Things in Heaven and Earth

obeys at the first Nod and Beckning to them. Hills, Seas, Mountains, Rivers, Sun and Moon, and Clouds, Men and Beasts, Angels and Devils, all of them are acted, moved, and inclined according to his Pleasure, all of them are about his Work indeed, as the Result of all in the End shall make it appear, and are Servants at his Command, going where he bids go, and coming where he bids come, led by an invisible Hand, though in the mean time they know it not, but think they are about their own Business, applaud themselves for a Time in it, *ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.* Godly Men who know his Will and love it are led by it willingly, for they yield themselves up to his Disposal: But wicked Men, who have contrary Wills of their own, they can gain no more by resisting, but to be drawn along with it.

Now to what Purpose is all this spoken of God's Decrees and Purposes, which he hath called a secret belonging to Himself? If his Works and Judgments be a great Depth, and unsearchable, sure his Decrees are far more unsearchable: For it is the secret and hidden Purpose of God, which is the very Depth of his Way and Judgment. But to what Purpose is it all, I say, not to enquire curiously into the Particulars of them, but to profit by them: The Scripture holds out to us the Unchangeableness, Freedom, Extent, Holiness and Wisdom of them, for our Advantage, and if this Advantage be not reaped we know them in vain. Not to burden your Memory with many Particulars, we should labour to draw forth both Instruction and Consolation out of them. Instruction, I say, in two Things especially, to submit with Reverence and Respect to his Majesty in all his Works and Ways, and to trust in him who knows all his Works, and will not change his Mind.

There is nothing, wherein I know Christians more deficient than in this Point of Submission, which I take to be one of the chiefest and sweetest, though hardest Duties of a Christian. It is hardly to be found among Men, a through Complyance of the Soul to what his Soul desires, a real Subjection of our Spirits to his good Will and Pleasure: There is nothing so much blessed in Scripture, as waiting on him, as yielding to him to be disposed upon, *Blessed are all they that wait on Him:* Pride is the greatest Opposite, and he opposes himself most to that, for it is in its own Nature most derogatory to the Highness and Majesty of God, which is His very Glory; therefore Submission is most acceptable to him, when the Soul yields its self and its Will to him: He condescends far more to it, he cannot be an Enemy to such a Soul; Submission to his Majesty's Pleasure, is the very bowing down of the Soul willingly, to any Thing He does or commands: Whatever Yoke he puts on, of Duty or suffering, to take it on willingly, without answering again, which is the great Sin condemned in Servants; to put the Mouth in the Dust, and to keep silence, because He doth it. *I was dumb with silence, I opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it*; there is Submission indeed, Silence of Mind and Mouth, a Restraint put upon the Spirit to think nothing grudgingly of Him, for any Thing he doth: It is certainly the greatest Fault of Christians, and Ground of many more, that ye do not look to God, but to creatures in any Thing befals you, therefore there are so frequent Risings of Spirits against his Yoke, frequent spurnings against it, as *Ephraim* unaccustomed with the Yoke, so do ye, and this is it only makes it heavy and troublesome; if there

there were no more Reaſon for it, but your own Gain, it is the only Way to Peace and Quietneſs, *Durum ſed levius fit patientia, quicquid corrigere eſt nefas*, your Impatience cannot Help you, but hurt you, it is the very Yoke of your Yoke; but quiet and ſilent ſtooping makes it eaſie in it ſelf, and brings in more Help beſide, even Divine Help: Learn this I beſeech you, to get your own Wills abandoned, and your Spirits ſubdued to God, both in the Point of Duty and Diſpenſation. If Duties commanded croſs thy Spirit (as certainly the Reality and Exerciſe of Godlineſs muſt be unpleaſant to any Nature) know what thou art called to, to quite thy own Will to Him, to give up thy ſelf to his Pleaſure ſingly, without ſo much reſpect to thy own Pleaſure or Gain; learn to obey Him ſimply becauſe he commands, though no Profit redound to thee, and by this Means thou ſhalt in due Time have more ſweet Peace and real Gain, though thou intended it not. And in caſe any Diſpenſation croſs thy Mind, let not thy Mind riſe up againſt it, do not fall out with Providence, but commit thy Way wholly to him, and let him do what he pleaſes in that, be thou minding thy Duty, be not anxious in that, but be diligent in this, and thou ſhalt be the only Gainer by it, beſides the Honour redounds to him.

Then I would exhort you from this Ground, to truſt in him; ſeeing he alone is the abſolute Sovereign Lord of all Things, ſeeing he has paſt a Determination upon all Things, and accordingly they muſt be, and ſeeing none can turn him from his Way, O then Chriſtians learn to commit your ſelves to him in all Things, both for this Life and the Life to come: Why are ye ſo vain and fooliſh, as to depend and hang upon poor vain depending Creatures? Why do ye not forſake your ſelves? Why do ye not forſake all other Things as empty Shadows? Are not all created Powers, Habits, Gifts, Graces, Strength, Riches, *&c.* like the Idols in Compariſon him, who can neither do Good, neither can they do Ill? *Curſed is he that truſts in Man*, Jer. xvii. 15, 16. There needs no other Curſe than the very Diſappointment you ſhall meet withal. Conſider I beſeech you that our God can do all Things, what ever he pleaſes in Heaven and Earth, and that none can obſtruct his Pleaſure; bleſt is that Soul for whom the Counſel of his Will is engaged, and it is engaged for all that truſt in him; he can accompliſh his good Pleaſure in thy Behalf, either without, or againſt Means, all Impediments and Thorns ſet in his Way, he can burn them up: You who are Heirs of the Promiſes, O know your Privilege, what his Soul deſireth, he doth even that; and what he hath ſeriouſly promiſed to you, he deſires. If you ask, who are Heirs of the Promiſes? I would anſwer ſimply, theſe and theſe only who do own them, and challenge them, and claim to them for their Life and Salvation; theſe who ſeek the Inheritance only by the Promiſe, and whoſe Soul deſires them and imbraces them. O if you would obſerve how unlike ye are to God, ye change often, ye turn often out of the Way, but that were not ſo ill if ye did not imagine him to be like your ſelves, and it is Unbelief which makes him like to your ſelves when your Frame and tender Diſpoſition changes, when Preſence and Acceſs to God is removed; that is wrong, it ſpeaks out a mortal Creature indeed; but if it be ſo, O do no more wrong, do not by your Suſpicions and Jealouſies, and Queſtionings of him imagine that he is like unto you,

and changed also, that is a double Wrong and Dishonour to his Majesty. Hath He not said, *I am God, and changes not: He in one Mind, who can turn him?* How comes it then that ye doubt of his Love as oft as ye change? When ye are in a good Temper, ye think He loves you; when it is not so, ye cannot believe but He is angry and hates you; is not this to speak quite contrary to the Word, that he is a God that changes, that He is not in one Mind, but now in one, and then in another, as oft as the unconstant Wind of a Soul's self-pleasing Humour turns about. Here is your Rest and Confidence; if you will be established, not within your selves, not upon Marks and Signs within you, which ebb and flow as the Sea, and change as the Moon, but upon His unchangeable Nature and faithful Promises. This we desire to hold out to you all, as one Ground for all; you would every one have some particular Ground in your own Disposition, and Condition, and think it general Doctrine only which layeth it not home so; but believe it, I know no Ground of real Soul-establishment, but general Truths, and Principles common to you all; and our Business is not to lay any other Foundation, or moe Foundations, according to your different Conditions, but to lay this one Foundation, Christ, and God unchangeable, and to exhort every one of you to make that general Foundation your own in partticular, by leaning to it, and building upon it, and claiming to it; all other are sandy and ruinous.

Let us now in this sad Time press Consolation from this. The Lord's Hand is in all this; it's immediate in every Dispensation, and it's only Carnal-mindedness that cannot see him stretching out his Hand to every Man, with his own Portion of Affliction: Know this one Thing, that God is *in one Mind*; for all these many Ways and Judgments He is in one Mind, to gather the Saints, to build up the Church, the Body of Christ. This is His End, all other Businesses is in the by, and subservient to this; therefore he will change it as He pleases, but His great Purpose of Good to His People all the World cannot hinder. Let us then establish our Souls in this Consideration; all is clear above, albeit cloudy below; all is calm in Heaven, albeit tempestuous here upon Earth: There is no Confusion, no Disorder in His Mind; though we think the World out of Course, and that all Things reel about with Confusion, He hath one Mind in it, and who can turn Him? And that Mind is Good to them that trust in Him; And therefore, who can turn away our Good? Let Men consult and imagine what they please, let them pass Votes and Decrees what to do with His People, yet it is all to no Purpose, for there is a Counsel above, an older Counsel, which must stand and take Place in all Generations. If Mens Conclusions be not according to the Counsel of His Will, they are but imaginary Dreams, like the Fancies of a distracted Person, who imagining himself a King, sits down on the Throne, and gives out Decrees and Ordinances. May not He who sits in Heaven laugh at the Foolishness and Madness of Men, who act in all Things as if they had no Dependance on Him, and go about their Business, as if it were not contrived already; it is a ridiculous Thing for Men to order their Business, and settle their own Conclusions, without once minding One above them, who hath not only a negative, but an affirmative Vote in all Things: It's true, that God in his deep Wisdom hath kept up His particular Purposes secret, that Men may walk according,

cording to an appointed Rule, and uſe all Means for compaſſing their intended Ends; and therefore it is well ſaid, *Prudens futuri temporis exitum, caliginoſa nocte premit Deus*; but yet withall we ſhould mind that of *James*, *If the Lord Will*, and go about all Things, even the moſt probable, with Submiſſion to his Will and Pleaſure. And therefore, when Men go without their Bounds, either in Fear of Danger, or Joy conceived in Succeſſes. *Ridetque ſi mortalis ultra fas trepidet*, &c. Exceſs of Fear, Exceſs of Hope, Exceſs of Joy in theſe outward Things, is, as it were, ridiculous to Him, who hath all theſe Things appointed with Him. To him be Praiſe and Glory.

Eph. i. 11. *In whom alſo we have obtained an Inheritance being predeſtinated*, &c.

Rom. ix. 22, 23. *What if God, willing to ſhew His Wrath, and to make His Power known*, &c.

IN the Creation of the World, it pleaſed the Lord, after all Things were framed and diſpoſed, to make one Creature to rule over all, and to him He gave the moſt excellent Nature, and Privileges beyond the reſt; ſo that it may appear that He had made all Things for Man, and Man immediately for His own Glory: As Man was the chief of the Works of his Hands, ſo we may, according to the Scriptures, conceive that he was chiefly minded in the Counſels of his Heart. And that, as in the Execution of his Purpoſe in creating the World, Man had the Preheminence aſſigned unto him, and all ſeemed ſubordinate unto him; ſo, in the Lord's Purpoſes concerning the World, his Purpoſe about Man has the Preheminence. He, indeed, has reſolved to declare the Glory of his Name in this World; Therefore the Heavens and Firmament are made Preachers of that Glory, *Pſal.* xix. 1, 2, *&c.* But in a ſpecial Manner, his Majeſty's glorious Name is manifeſted in Man, and about Man; he hath ſet Man, as it were, in the Center or Midſt of the Creation, that all the Creatures might direct or bring in their Praiſes unto him, to be offered up in his and their Name to the Lord their Maker by him, as the common Mouth of the World; and the Lord hath choſen this Creature above all the Creatures, for the more ſolemn and glorious Declaration of Himſelf in his ſpecial Properties; therefore we ſhould gather our Thoughts in this Buſineſs, to hear from the Lord what his Thoughts are towards us; for, certainly, the right Underſtaning of his everlaſting Counſel, touching the eternal State of Man, is of ſingular Virtue to conform us to the Praiſe of his Name, and eſtabliſh us in Faith and Confidence. Predeſtination is a Myſtery indeed, into which we ſhould not curiouſly and boldly enquire beyond what is revealed; for then a Soul muſt needs loſe it ſelf in that Depth of Wiſdom, and periſh in the Search of Unſearchableneſs; And thus the Word ſpeaks in Scripture of this Subject intimating to

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us, that it is rather to be admired than conceived; and that there ought to be some Ignorance of these Secrets, which, conjoyned with Faith and Reverence, is more learned than any curious Knowledge: But withall we must open our Eyes upon so much Light as God reveals of these Secrets, knowing, that the Light of the Word is a saving refreshing Light, not confounding, as is his inaccessible Light of secret Glory. As far as it pleases his Majesty to open his Motuh, let us not close our Ears, but open them also to his Instruction, knowing, that as he will withhold no necessary Thing for our Salvation, so he will reveal nothing but what is profitable. This is the best Bond of Sobriety and humble Wisdom, to learn what he teacheth us, but when he makes an End of teaching, to desire no more Learning: It's Humility to seek no more, and it is true Wisdom to be content with no less.

There is much Weakness in our conceiving of Divine Things; we shape and form them in our Minds according to a Mould of our own Experience, or Invention, and cannot conceive of them as they are in themselves: If we should speak properly, there are not Counsels and Purposes in God, but one entire Counsel and Resolution concerning all Things which are in Time, by which he hath disposed all in their several Times, Seasons, Conditions, and Orders; but because we have many Thoughts, about many Things, so we cannot well conceive of God, but in Likeness to our selves; And therefore the Scripture, condescending to our Weakness, speaks so. *How many are thy precious Thoughts towards me*, saith *David*; and yet indeed, there is but one Thought of him, and us, and all, which one Thought is of so much Virtue, that it is equivalent to an infinite Number of Thoughts, concerning infinite Objects. The Lord hath from everlasting conceived one Purpose of manifesting His own Glory in such several Ways: And this is the Head-spring of all that befalls Creature, Men and Angels. But because in the Execution of this Purpose, there is a certain Order, and Succession, and Variety, therefore Men do ordinarily fancy such or such a Frame and Order in the Lord's Mind and Purpose. And as the Astronomers do cut and carve in their Imagination, Cycles, Orbs, and Epicycles in the Heavens, because of the various and different Appearances and Motions of Stars in them, whereas it may be, really, there is but one Celestial Body, in which all these various Lights and Motions do appear: So do Men fancy unto themselves an Order in the Lord's Decree, according to the *Phænomena*, or Appearances of His Works in the World; whereas it is one Purpose and Decree, which in its infinite Compass comprehends all these Varieties and Orders together: This much we may indeed lawfully conceive of His Decree, that there is an exact Correspondence and Suitableness between His Majesty's Purpose and Execution, and that he is a wise Lord, *wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in working*, having some great Plot and Design before his Eyes, which he intends to effect, and which is, as it were, the great Light and Sun of this Firmament, unto which, by that same wonderful Counsel, all other Things are subordinate; and so in the working it shall appear exactly, as his Counsel did delineate and contrive it.

There is no Man so empty or shallow, but he hath some great Design and Purpose which he chiefly aims at; shall we not then conceive, that the Lord, who instructs every Man to this Discretion, and teaches him, *Isa.* xxviii. 26. is himself wise

wise in his Counsel, and hath some grand Project before him in all this Fabrick of the World, and the upholding of it since it was made? Certainly he hath; and if you ask what it is, the wise Man will teach you in general, *He made all Things for Himself, even the wicked for the evil Day*, Prov. xvi. 4. Here then is his great Design and Purpose, to glorify Himself, to manifest his own Name to Men and Angels. Now, his Name comprehends Wisdom, Goodness, Power, Mercy, and Justice; the first three He declares in all the Works of his Hands, all are well done, and wisely done, the Excellency of the Work shews the wonderful Counsellour, and the wise Contriver; the Goodness of any Creature in its Kind, declares the inexhausted Spring of a Self-being from whom it proceeds, and the bringing all these out of nothing, and upholding them is a glorious Declaration of his Power: But yet, in all the Works of his Hands, there is nothing found to manifest His glorious Mercy, and Justice, upon which are the Flower and Garland of his Attributes, and unto which Wisdom and Power seems to be subservient; Therefore his Majesty, in that one entire Purpose of his own Glory, resolves to manifest his Wrath, and his Mercy, upon Men and Angels, Subjects capable of it; which two Attributes are as the Poles about which all the Wheels of Election and Reprobation turns, as you see in the Place, *Rom.* ix. 22, 23. Let this then be established as the End of all his Works, as it is designed in his Counsel, and nothing else. It is not the Creature, nor any Thing in the Creature, which is first in his Mind, but Himself, and therefore, *of Him, and for Him are all Things*; Here they have their Rise, and thither they return, even to the Ocean of God's eternal Glory, from whence all did spring.

The right establishing of this will help us to conceive aright of his Counsel of Predestination: It is a common Cavil of carnal Reason, how can the Lord reject so many Persons, and fore-ordain them to Destruction? It seems most contrary to his Goodness and Wisdom, to have such an End of eternal Predestination before Him, in the creating of so many Thousands, to make Men for nothing but to damn them; Here carnal Reason, which is *Enmity to God*, triumphs; But consider, I say, that this is not the Lord's End and chief Design to destroy Men; even as it is not his Majesty's first Look, or furthest Reach to give unto others eternal Life; so it is not His prime Intent to sink them into eternal Death, as if that were his Pleasure and Delight; no indeed, neither is the Creature's Happiness, nor its Misery that which first moves Him, or is most desired of Him, but Himself only, and He cannot move out of himself to any Business, but he must return it unto Himself; therefore the wise Preacher expresses it well, *He made all for Himself, even the wicked for the Day of Evil*; It was not His great End of creating wicked Men to damn them, or creating righteous Men to save them, but both are for a further and higher End, for Himself and His own Glory.

All seem to agree about this, That the great End of all the Lord's Counsel and Decrees, is his own Glory to be manifested on Men and Angels; and that this must be first in his Mind; not that there is first or last with Him, but to speak after the Manner of Men. If He had many Thoughts, as we have, this would be His first Thought, and in this one Purpose this End is chiefly aimed at, and all other Things are by the Lord's

Lord's Counsel, subordinate to this as Means to compass that: But as concerning the Order of these Means, and consequently of his Majesty's Purpose about them, Men by examining his Majesty according to the Creature's Rules, or according to Sense, bring Him down far below His own infinite Greatness. Some conceive, that that was first, as it were, in His Mind which is first done: Looking upon the Execution of His Purpose in the Works of His Power, they imagine, that as He first created Man righteous, so this was His first Thought concerning Man, to create Man for the Glory of his Goodness and Power, without any particular Determination as yet of His End. And I conceive, this is the Thought of the Multitude of People; they think God was disappointed in His Work, when they hear He created such a glorious Creature, that is now become so miserable; they cannot believe that his Majesty had all this Sin and Misery determined with Him when He purposed to create him, but look upon the Emergent of Man's Fall into Sin and Misery as a Surprisal of his Majesty; as if He had meant another Thing in creating him, and so was, upon this Occasion of Man's Sin, driven to a new Consultation about the helping of the Business, and making the best out of it that might be. Thus through Wisdom the World knows not God; they think God altogether like themselves, and so liken Him to the Builder of an House, who set nothing before him in doing so, but to build it after that Manner for his own Ends, but then being surprized with the Fall and Ruin of it, takes a new Advisement, and builds it up again upon another surer Foundation; But because they cannot say, that God takes any new Advisements in Time, but must confess, that all His Counsels are everlasting concerning all the Works of His Hands; Therefore they bring in Fore-knowledge to smooth their irreligious Conceit of God, as if the Lord, upon His Purpose of creating Man, had fore-seen what should befall him, and so purposed to permit it to be so, that out of it He might erect some glorious Fabrick of Mercy and Justice upon the Ruins of Man; And that little or nothing may be left to the absolute Sovereign Will of God, to which the Scripture ascribes all Things, they must again imagine, that upon His Purpose of sending Christ to save Sinners, he is yet undetermined about the particular End of particular Men, but watches on the Tower of Fore-knowledge to espie what they will do, whether Men will believe in His Son or not, whether they will persevere in Faith or not, and according to His Observation of their Doings, so He applies his own Will to carve out their Reward or Portion of Life or Death. These are even the Thoughts which are inbred in your Breasts by Nature; that which the learned call *Arminianism*, is nothing else but the carnal Reason of Mens Hearts, which is Enmity to God; it is that very Disputation which *Paul* in this *Chap.* exclaims against, *Who art thou, O Man, that disputes.*

But certainly, all this Contrivance is nothing beseeming the Wisdom or Sovereignty of God, but reflects upon both; upon his Wisdom, that he should have Thoughts of creating the most noble of his Creatures, and yet be in suspense about the End of the Creature, and have that in Uncertainty what Way his Glory shall indeed be manifested by it. Is it not the first and chief Thought of every wise Man, what He intends and aims at in his Work, and according to the Measure and Reach of His Wisdom, so he reaches further in

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His End and Purpose? Shall we then conceive the only wise God so far to have mistaken Himself, as to do that which no wise Man would do: He who is of such an infinite Reach of Wisdom and Understanding, to fall upon the Thoughts of making such an excellent Creature, and yet to ly in suspense within Himself about the eternal Estate of it, and to be in a waiting Posture what way his Glory should be manifested by it; whether in a Way of simple Goodness only, or in a Way of Justice, or in a Way of Mercy, till He should foresee off the Tower of Foreknowledge how that Creature should behave it self. Our Text speaks not thus: For in the Place, *Eph.* i. we have the Lord in his eternal Purpose carving out to such and such particular Persons an Inheritance, and Adoption of Children, for that great End of the Glory of his Grace, *Ver.* 11. and 5, 6. And Predestination falls out, not according to our Carriage, but according to the Purpose of Him who *works all Things* that He works *after the Counsel of His own Will*, without consulting our Will; and if you enquire what are these *all Things*, certainly, we must take it simply for *all Things* that are at all, or have any real Being: His Power, his Hand must be in it, and that according to his own Counsel, without respect had to the Creature's Will, according to His own good Pleasure, *Ver.* 5, 11. He had no sooner a Thought of working and making Man, but this Purpose was in it, to make such Men to the Praise of his glorious Grace, and to fore-ordain them to an Inheritance, and others to make or fit them for Destruction, as the Text, *Rom.* ix. 22. bears. Herein the great and unsearchable Wisdom of God appears to be a great Depth, that when he hath a Thought of making such a Vessel, he hath this Purpose in the Bosom of it, what Use it shall be for, whether for Honour or Dishonour, and accordingly in his Counsel he prepares it either to Glory, or Destruction, and in Time makes it fit for its Use, either by Sin or Grace: Here is the Depth that cannot be sounded by mortal Men, *O the Depth of the Riches both of his Wisdom and Knowledge! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* The whole Tenour of the Scripture shews that his Majesty was not surprised, and taken at unawares by *Adam*'s Fall, but that it fell out according to the determined Counsel of his Will. If he knew it, and suffered it to be, certainly he permitted it, because he willed it should be so; And why may he not determine that in his holy Counsel which his Wisdom can disabuse to the most glorious End that can be? Why may not he decree such a Fall, who out of Man's Ruines can erect such a glorious Throne for his Grace and Justice to triumph into? It is more for the Glory of his infinite Wisdom, to bring Good, and such a Good, out of Evil, than only to permit that Good should be.

Then such Doctrine is repugnant to the Lord's absolute Power and Sovereignity, which is *Paul*'s Sanctuary whether he flies unto as a sure Refuge, from the Stroke or Blast of carnal Reason. *Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay, to make of the same Lump, one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour*, Ver. 21. Hath not the Lord more absolute Dominion over us, than the Potter hath over the Clay, for the Potter made not the Clay, but the Lord hath made us of nothing; so that simply and absolutely we are His, and not our own, and so he hath an absolute Right to make any Use of us he pleases, without consulting our Wills

and Deſervings. Can any Man quarrel him for preparing him to Deſtruction, ſeeing he owes nothing to any Man, but may do with his own what he pleaſes? What if God, willing to make known his Power, and Juſtice, and Wrath, have fitted and prepared ſome Veſſels for Deſtruction, with which, in Time, he bears much, and forbears long, uſing much Patience towards them? Can any Man challenge him for it? *Ver.* 22. And what, if God willing to make known the Riches of his Grace, have prepared ſome Veſſels to Glory, ſhall any Man's Eye be Evil becauſe he is Good? *Ver.* 23. Shall Man be left to be his own Diſpoſer, and the Shaper of his own Fortune? Sure it was not ſo with *Eſau* and *Jacob*, they were alike in the Womb; if there was any Prerogative, *Eſau* the eldeſt had it, they had done neither Good nor Evil: What Difference was then between them to caſt the Ballance of his Will? Can you imagine any? Indeed carnal Reaſon will ſay, that God fore-knew what they would do, and ſo he choſe or rejected them: But, why doth not the Apoſtle anſwer thus unto that Objection of Unrighteouſneſs in God; *Ver.* 14. It had been ready and plain, but rather he oppoſes the Will and Calling of God, to all Works paſt, or to come; he gives no Anſwer but this, *He will have Mercy becauſe he will have Mercy*, that is the ſupream Rule of Righteouſneſs, and hitherto muſt we flee, as the ſureſt Anchor of our Hope and Stability; our Salvation depends not on our willing or running, on our reſolving or doing, but upon this primitive good Pleaſure and Will of God, on which hangs our willing, and running, and obtaining. It is certainly an unorderly Order, to flee unto that in Men, for the Cauſe of God's eternal Counſels, which only flows from his eternal Counſel, *Eph.* i. 4. Hath he choſen us becauſe he did fore-know that we would be Holy, and without Blame, as Men think? Or hath he not rather choſen us to be Holy and without Blame; He cannot behold any Good or Evil in the Creatures, till his Will paſs a Sentence upon it, for from whence ſhould it come?

Seeing then this Order and Contrivance of God's Purpoſe is but feigned, it ſeems to ſome that the very contrary Method were more ſuitable, even to the Rules of Wiſdom: You know what is firſt in Mens Intention, is laſt in Execution, the End is firſt in their Mind, then the Means to compaſs that End: But in Practice again, Men fall firſt upon the Means, and by them come at length to attain their End; therefore theſe who would have that firſt as it were in God's Mind, which he doth firſt, do even croſs common Rules of Reaſon in humane Affairs: It would ſeem then (ſay ſome) that this Method might do well, that what is laſt in his Execution, was firſt in his Purpoſe, and by him intended as the End of what he doth firſt, and ſo ſome do rank his Decrees; that he had firſt a Thought of glorifying Man, and to attain this End he purpoſed to give him Grace, and for this Purpoſe to ſuffer him to fall, and for all to create him: But we muſt not look thus upon it either: It were a fooliſh and ridiculous Counſel unbeſeeming the poor Wiſdom of Man, to purpoſe the glorifying of Man whom he had not yet determined to create; therefore we ſhould always have in our Mind, that the great End and Project of all is the Glory of his Mercy and Juſtice upon Men; and this we may conceive is firſt in order, neither Mens Life nor Death, but God's Glory to be manifeſted upon Men:

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Now to attain this glorious End, with one Inclination or Determination of his Will, not to be distinguished or severed, he condescends upon all that is done in Time, as one compleat and intire Mean of glorifying Himself, so that one of them is not before another in his Mind, but altogether: For attaining this, he purposes to create Man, he ordains the Fall of all Men into a State of Sin and Misery, and some of these upon whom he had resolved to shew his Mercy, he gives them to Christ to be redeemed, and restored by Grace; Others he fore-ordains them to Destruction, and all this at once, without any such Order as we imagine: Now though he intend all this at once and together, yet it doth not hence follow that all these must be executed together, as when a Man intends to build a House for his own Accommodation, there are many Things in the House, upon which he hath not several Purposes: But yet they must be severally, and in some Order done: First the Foundation laid, then the Walls raised, then the Roof put on; yet he did not intend the Foundation to be for the Walls, or the Walls for the Roof, but altogether for himself: Even so the Lord purposes to glorify his Mercy and Justice upon a certain Number of Persons, and for this End to give them a Being, to govern their falling into Misery, to raise some out of it by a Mediator, and to leave some into it to Destruction, and all this as one intire Mean to illustrate His glorious Mercy and Justice; but these Things themselves must be done not all at once, but one before another, either as their own Nature requires, or as he pleases: The very Nature of the Thing requires that Man be created before he sin, that he sin and fall before a Mediator suffer for his Sin, and that he have a Being before he have a glorious Being, and that he have a sinful and miserable Being, before he have this glorious and gracious Being, which may manifest the Grace and Mercy of God: But it is the Pleasure of the Lord that determines in what Time and Order Christ shall suffer, either before or after the Conversion of Sinners, or whether Sinners shall be presently instated in Glory and perfectly delivered from all Sin at their first Conversion, or only in Part during this Life.

Seeing then this was his Majesty's Purpose to make so many Vessels of Honour, upon whom he might glorifie the Riches of his Grace and Mercy; And so many Vessels of Wrath, upon whom he might shew the Power of his Anger; You may think what needed all this Business of Man's Redemption, might not God have either preserved so many as he had appointed to Glory from falling into Sin and Misery, or at least have freely pardoned their Sin without any Satisfaction, and out of the exceeding Riches of his Mercy and Power, have as well not imputed Sin to them at all, as imputed their Sins to Christ, who was not guilty? What needed his giving so many to the Son and the Son's receiving them? What needed these Mysteries of Incarnation, of Redemption, seeing he might have done all this simply without so much Pains and Expence? Why did he choose this Way? Indeed, that is the Wonder, and if there were no more End for it, but to confound Mortality that dare ask Him what he doth, it is enough; should he be called down to the Bar of human Reason, to give an Account of his Matters? *Who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or being his Counsellour hath taught Him?* That is in the Depths of his unsearchable Understanding, that He chose to go

this round, and to compass his End by such a strange Circuit of Means, when he might have done it simply and directly without so much Pains; yet it is not so hidden, but he hath revealed as much as may satisfy or silence all Flesh: For we must consider, that his great Project is not simply to manifest the Glory of his Goodness, but of his gracious and merciful Goodness, the most tender and excellent of all; and therefore Man must be miserable, sinful, and vile, that the Riches of his Grace may appear in choosing and saving such Persons: But that it may appear also how excellent he could make Man, and how vain all created Perfections are, being left to themselves; therefore he first made Man righteous, and being fallen into Sin and Misery, he might straight way have restored him without more ado, but his Purpose was to give an exact Demonstration of Mercy, tempered and mixed with Justice; and therefore he finds out the Satisfaction in his eternal Counsel, *I have found a Ransom*, and so he chooses Jesus Christ to be the Head of these chosen Souls, in whom they might be again restored unto eternal Life; and these Souls, he, in his everlasting Purpose, gives over to the Son to be redeemed, and these the Son receives. And thus the Glory of Mercy and Justice shines most brightly, yea, more brightly, than if he had at first pardoned. O how doth his Love and Mercy appear, that he will transfer our Sins upon his Holy Son, and accept that Redemption for us: And his Justice, that a Redemption and Price he must have, even from his Son, when once he comes in the Stead of Sinners; And in this Point do the Songs of Eternity concenter.

Rom. ix. 22. *What if God willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much long suffering the Vessels of Wrath, fitted to Destruction.*

Eph. i. 11. *In whom also we have obtained an Inheritance, being predestinated according to the Purpose of him, who worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will.*

WE are now upon a high Subject; high, indeed, for an eminent Apostle, much more above our Reach; the very Consideration of God's infinite Wisdom might alone suffice to restrain our unlimited Thoughts, and serve to sober our Minds with the Challenge of our own Ignorance and Darkness, yet the vain and wicked Mind of Man will needs quarrel with God, and enter the Lists of Disputation with him, about his Righteousness and Wisdom in the Counsel of Election and Reprobation: *But who art thou, O Man, that replyest against God, or disputes?* Ver. 20. This is a Thing not to be disputed, but believed; and if ye will believe no more than ye can comprehend by Sense or Reason, then ye give his Majesty no more Credit than to weak mortal Man. Whatever secret Thoughts do rise up in thy Heart when thou hearest of God's foreordaining Men

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to eternal Life, without previous Foresight or Consideration of their Doings, and preparing Men to eternal Wrath, for the Praise of his Justice, without previous Consideration of their Deservings, and passing a definitve Sentence upon the End of all Men, before they do either Good or Evil: When ever any secret Surmises rise in thy Heart against this, learn to answer thus, enter not the Lists of Disputation with corrupt Reason, but put in this Bridle of the Fear of God's Greatness, and the Conscience of thy own Baseness, and labour to restrain thy undaunted and wild Mind by it. Ponder that well, who thou art who disputes; who God is, against whom thou disputes, and if thou have spoken once, thou wilt speak no more: What thou art, who is as Clay, formed out of nothing, what he is, who is the Former; and hath not the Potter Power over the Clay? Consider but how great Wickedness it is, so much as to question him, or ask an Account of his Matters. After you have found his Will to be the Cause of all Things, then to enquire farther into a Cause of his Will which is alone the Self-rule of Righteousness; it is to seek something above his Will, and to reduce his Majesty into the Order of Creatures: It is most abominable Usurpation and Sacrilege, for both it robes him of his Royal Prerogative, and instates the base Footstool into his Throne: But know, that certainly God will overcome when he is judged, *Psal.* li. 6. If thou judge him, he will condemn thee; if thou oppugn his absolute and holy Decrees, he will hold thee fast bound by them to thy Condemnation; he needs no other Defence, but to call out thy own Conscience against thee, and bind thee over to Destruction; therefore, as one saith well, *Let the Rashness of Men be restrained from seeking that which is not, lest peradventure they find that which is*; seek not a Reason of his Purposes, lest peradventure thou find thy own Death and Damnation infolded in them.

Paul mentions two Objections of carnal and fleshly Wisdom against this Doctrine of Election and Reprobation, which indeed contain the Sum of all that is vented and invented even to this Day, to defile the spotless Truth of God: All the Whisperings of Men tend to one of these two, either to justify themselves, or to accuse God of Unrighteousness; And, shall any do it and be guiltless? I confess, some oppose this Doctrine, not so much out of an Intention of accusing God, as out of a preposterous and ignorant Zeal for God; even as *Job*'s Friends did speak much for God. Nay, but it was not well spoken, they did but speak wickedly for him: Some speak much to the Defence of his Righteousness and Holiness, and under Pretence of that Plea make it inconsistent with these, to fore-ordain to Life or Death without the Fore-sight of their Carriage; But shall they speak wickedly for God, or will he accept their Person? He who looks into the Secrets of the Heart knows the Rise and Bottom of such Defences and Apologies for his Holiness, to be partly Self-love, partly narrow and limited Thoughts of him, drawing him down to the Determinations of his own greatest Enemy, carnal Reason. Since Men will ascribe him no Righteousness, but such a one of their own shaping, conformed to their own Model; do they not indeed rob him of his Holiness and Righteousness.

I find two or three Objections which may be reduced to this Head. First, It seems Unrighteousness with God, to predestinate Men to eternal Death, without their

their own evil Deſerving, or any Forethought of it: That before any Man had a Being, God ſhould have been in his Counſel, fitting ſo many to Deſtruction. Is it not a ſtrange Mocking of the Creatures, to puniſh them for that Sin and Corruption, unto which by his eternal Counſel they were fore-ordained? This is even that which *Paul* objects to himſelf, *Is there Unrighteouſneſs with God?* Is it not Unrighteouſneſs to hate *Eſau* before he deſerves it? Is he not unrighteous, to adjudge him to Death before he do evil? *ver.* 14. Let *Paul* anſwer for us, *God forbid?* Why, There needs no more Anſwer, but all Thoughts or Words which may in the leaſt reflect upon his Holineſs, are Abomination; tho' we could not tell how it is righteous and holy with him to do it, yet this we muſt hold that it is. It is his own Property to comprehend the Reaſon of his Counſels; it is our Duty to believe what he reveals of them, without further Enquiry: He tells us, that thus it is, clearly in this Chapter; this far then we muſt believe: He tells us not how it is, then further we ſhould not deſire to learn; God in keeping Silence of that, may put us to Silence, and make us conceive, that there is a Depth to be admired, not ſounded. Yet he goeth a little further, and indeed as high as can be, to God's Will, *He hath Mercy on whom he will, and whom he will be hardeneth.* Now further he cannot go, for there is nothing above this. We may deſcend from this, but we cannot aſcend, or riſe above it. But is this any Anſwer to the Argument? A Sophiſter could preſs it further, and take Advantag from that very Ground; What, Is no this to eſtabliſh a meer Tyranny in the Lord, that he doth all Things of meer Will and Pleaſure; diſtributes Rewards and Puniſhments without previous Conſideration of Mens Carriage? But here we muſt ſtand, and go no further than the Scriptures walk with us; whatever Reaſons or Cauſes may be aſſigned, yet certainly, we muſt at length come up thither: All Things are, becauſe he ſo willed, and why willed we ſhould not ask a Reaſon, becauſe his Will is ſupream Reaſon, and the very Self-rule of all Righteouſneſs: Therefore if once we know his Will, we ſhould preſently conclude that it is moſt righteous and holy. If that Evaſion of the Fore-knowledge of Mens Sins and Impenitency had been found ſolid, certainly, *Paul* would have anſwered ſo, and not have had his Refuge to the abſolute Will and Pleaſure of God, which ſeems to perplex it more; but he knew well, that there could nothing of that kind, whether Good or Evil, either actually be without his Will, or be to come without the Determination of the ſame Will, and ſo could not be foreſeen without the Counſel of his Will upon it; and therefore it had been but a poor Shift to have Refuge to that ſtarting Hole of Fore-knowledge, out of which he muſt preſently flee to the Will and Pleaſure of God, and ſo he betakes him ſtraight Way to that he muſt hold at, and oppoſes that Will to Man's Doings. *It is not of him that willeth*, &c. If he had meant only that *Jacob* and *Eſau* had actually done neither Good nor Evil, he needed not return to the Sanctuary of God's Will, for ſtill it might be ſaid, it is of him that runs and wills, and not of God's Will as the firſt Original, becauſe their Good and Evil foreſeen did move him to ſuch Love and Hatred. It is all alike of Works and of Men, whether theſe Works be preſent or to come: Therefore, I would adviſe every one of you, whatever ye conceive of his Judgment or Mercy,

Mercy, if he have ſhewed Mercy to you, O then reſt not in thy ſelf, but ariſe and aſcend till thou come to the Height of his eternal free Purpoſe; and if thou conceive thy Sin, and Miſery, and Judgment, thou may go up alſo to his holy Counſels, for the Glory of his Name, and ſilence thy ſelf with them; but it ſhall be moſt expedient for thee in the Thought of thy Miſeries to return always within, and ſearch the Corruption of thy Nature, which may alone make thee hateful enough to God. If thou ſearch thy own Conſcience, it will ſtop thy Mouth, and make thee guilty before God. Let not the Thought of his eternal Counſels diminiſh the Conviction of thy Guilt, or the Hatred of thy ſelf, for Sin and Corruption, but dwell more conſtantly upon this, becauſe thou art called and commanded ſo to do. One thing remains fixed: Though he hath fore-ordained Men to Death, yet none ſhall be damned till his Conſcience be forced to ſay, that he is worthy of it a thouſand Times.

There is another Whiſpering and Suggeſtion of the wicked Hearts of Men againſt the Predeſtination of God, which inſinuates that God is an Accepter of Perſons, and ſo accuſes him of partial and unrighteous Dealing, becauſe he deals not equally with all Men. Do ye not ſay this within your ſelves, If he find all Guilty, Why does he not puniſh all? Why does he ſpare ſome? And if he look upon all Men in his firſt and primitive Thought of them, as neither doing Good nor Evil, Why does he not have Mercy on all? But *is thy Eye evil becauſe he is Good?* May he not do with his own as he pleaſes? Becauſe he is merciful to ſome Souls, ſhall Men be diſpleaſed, and do well to be angry? Or, becauſe he of his own free Grace extends it, ſhall he be bound by a Rule to do ſo with all? Is not he both juſt and merciful, and is it not meet that both be ſhewed forth? If he puniſh thee, thou canſt not complain, for thou deſerves it; If he ſhew Mercy, why ſhould any quarrel, for it is free and undeſerved Grace; by ſaving ſome he ſhews his Grace, by deſtroying others he ſhews what all deſerve. God is ſo far from being an Accepter of Perſons according to their Qualifications and Conditions, that he finds nothing in any Creature to caſt the Ballance of his Choice; if he did chooſe Men for their Works ſake, or outward Privileges, and refuſe others for the Want of theſe, then it might be charged on him; but he rather goes over all theſe, nay, he finds none of theſe; in his firſt View of Men he beholds them all alike, and nothing to determine his Mind to one more than another, ſo that his Choice proceedeth wholly from within his own Breaſt; *I will have Mercy on whom I will.*

But then Thirdly, our Hearts object againſt the Righteouſneſs of God, that this fatal Chain of Predeſtination overturns all Exhortations and Perſwaſions to Godlineſs, all Care and Diligence in Well-doing: For thus do many profane Souls concieve, *If he be in one Mind, and who can turn Him?* then, What need I pray? Since he has already determined what ſhall be, and what ſhall become of me: His Purpoſe will take effect whether I pray, or pray not; my Prayer will not make him change his Mind; and if it be in his Mind he will do it; if he have appointed to ſave us, ſaved we ſhall be, live as we liſt; if he hath appointed us to Death, die we muſt, live as we can. Therefore Men, in this deſperate Eſtate, throw themſelves headlong into all Manner of Iniquity, and that with Quietneſs and Peace. Thus do

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many Souls perish upon the stumbling Stone laid in *Zion*, and wrest the Truths and Counsels of God to their own Destruction, even quite contrary to their true Intent and Meaning. *Paul* (*Eph.* i. 4.) speaks another Language, *He hath chosen us in him, that we should be holy and without Blame.* His eternal Counsel of Life is so far from loosing the Reins to Mens Lusts, that it is the only certain Foundation of Holiness; it is the very Spring and Fountain from whence our Sanctification flows, by an infallible Course. This Chain of God's Counsels concerning us, hath also linked together the End and the Means, Glory and Grace, Happiness and Holiness, that there is no destroying of them. *Without Holiness it is impossible to see God*; so that those who expect the one without any Desire of, and Endeavour after the other, they are upon a vain Attempt to loose the Links of this eternal Chain, *Rom.* viii. It is the only eternal choosing Love of God, which separated so many Souls from the common Misery of Men; it is that only which in Time doth appear, and rise as it were from under Ground, in the Streams or Fruits of Sanctification; and if the Ordinance of Life stand, so shall the Ordinance of Fruits, *Joh.* xv. 16. *Eph.* ii. 10. If he have appointed thee to Life, it is certain he has also ordained thee to Fruits, and chosen thee to be Holy; so that whatever Soul casts by the Study of this, there is too gross a Brand of Perdition upon its Forehead. It is true, all is already determined with him, and he is incapable of any Change, or Shadow of turning; nothing then wants, but he is in one Mind about it, and thy Prayer cannot turn him: Yet a godly Soul will pray with more Confidence, because it knows that as he determined upon all its Wants and Receipts, so he hath appointed this to be the very Way of obtaining what it wants; this is the Way of Familiarity and Grace, he takes with his own, to make them call, and he performs his Purpose in Answer to their Cry. But suppose there were nothing to be expected by Prayer, yet I say, that is not the Thing thou shouldst look to, but what is required of thee as thy Duty, to do that simply out of Regard to his Majesty, though thou should never profit by it; this is true Obedience to serve him for his own Pleasure, though we had no Expectation of Advantage by it: Certainly he doth not require thy Supplications for this End, to move him, and incline his Affections toward thee, but rather as a Testimony of thy Homage and Subjection to him; therefore though they cannot make him of another Mind than he is, or hasten Performance before his purposed Time, so that in reality they have no Influence upon him, yet in praying, and praying diligently, thou declares thy Obligation to him, and respect to his Majesty, which is all thou hast to look to, and to commit the Event solely to his good Pleasure.

The *second* Objection *Paul* mentions, tends to justifie Men. *Why then doth he yet find Fault, who hath resisted his Will?* Since by his Will he hath chained us with an inevitable Necessity to Sin, what can we do? Men cannot wrestle with him; why then doth he condemn and accuse them? *But who art thou O Man who disputes against God?* as if *Paul* had said, thou art a Man, and so I am, why then looks thou for an Answer from me, let us rather both consider whom we speak of, whom thou accusest, and whom I defend; it is God, what art thou then to charge him, or what am I so to clear him? Believing Ignorance is better than presumptuous

rious Knowledge, especially in these forbidden Secrets, in which it is more concerning to be ignorant with Faith and Admiration, than to know with Presumption. Dispute, thou, O Man, I will wonder; reply thou, I will believe. Doth it become thee, the Clay to speak so to thy Former, *Why hast thou made me thus?* Let the Consideration of the absolute Right and Dominion of God over us, more than any Creature hath over another, yea, or over themselves, let that restrain us, and keep us within Bounds. He may do with us what he pleaseth, for his own Honour and Praise, but it is his Will that we should leave all the Blame to our selves, and rather behold the evident Cause of our Destruction in our Sin, which is nearer us, than to search into a secret and incomprehensible Cause in God's Counsel.

Heb. xi. 3. *Through Faith we understand that the Worlds were made*, &c. with *Gen.* i.

WE are come down from the Lord's Purposes and Decrees to the Execution of them, which is partly in the Works of Creation, and partly in the Works of Providence. The Lord having resolved upon it to manifest his own Glory, did, in that due and predeterminate Time, apply his own Power to this Business; Having in great Wisdom conceived a Frame of the World in his Mind from all Eternity, he at length brings it forth, and makes it visible. We shall not insist upon the particular Story of it, as it is set down in general, but only point at some Things for our Instruction.

First, We see who is the Maker of all Things, of whom all Things visible and invisible are, it is God. And by this he useth to distinguish himself from Idols, and the Vanities of the Nations, that he is that Self-being, who gave all Things a Being, who made the Heavens and the Earth. This is even the most glorious Manifestation of an invisible and eternal *Being*: These Things that are made, shew him forth. If a Man were travelling into a far Country, and wandered into a Wilderness where he could see no Inhabitants, but only Houses, Villages, and Cities built, he would straight way conceive, there hath been some Work-men at this, this hath not been done casually, but by the Art of some reasonable Creatures; how much more may we conceive when we look on the Fabrick of this World, how the Heavens are stretched out for a Tent to cover them that dwell on the Earth, and the Earth settled and established as a firm Foundation for Men and living Creatures to abide on, how all are done in Wisdom and Discretion; we cannot but straight way imagine that there must be some curious and wise Contriver, and mighty Creator of these Things. It is here said, that *by Faith we understand that the Worlds were made*. Indeed Faith only in the Word of God gives true and distinct Understanding of it. Innumerable have been the Wandrings and Mistakes of the wise of the World about this Matter, wanting this Lamp and Light of the Word of God, which alone gives a true

and perfect Account of this Thing. Many strange Dotages and Fancies have they fallen into; yet certain it is that there is so much of the Glory of God ingraven without on the Creature, and so much Reason imprinted on the Souls of Men within, that (if it were not for that judicial Plague of the Lord's darkning their Understandings, who do not glorify him in as far as they know him) no Man could seriously and soberly consider on the visible World, but he would be constrained to conceive an invisible God. Would not every one think within himself, all these Things, so excellent as they are, cannot be out of Chance, neither could they make themselves, so that of Necessity they must owe what they are to something beside themselves; and of this it is certain, that it cannot have its Original from any other Thing, else there should be no End; therefore it must be some supream *Being*, that is from no other, and of which are all Things.

But next, consider when these Things were made: *In the Beginning*, and what Beginning is that? Certainly the Beginning of the Creation, and of Time, to exclude Eternity; what ever may be said of that Subtility that God might have created the World from all Eternity, for it appears even in created Things, that there is no Necessity of the precedent Existence of the Cause, since in the same Instant that many Things are into Being, in the same do they bring forth their Effects, as the Sun in the first Instant of its Creation did illuminate; yet certainly we believe from the Word of the Lord, that the World is actually but of a few thousand Years standing, six are not yet run out since the first creating Word was spoken, and since the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the Waters; and this we know also, that if it had pleased his Majesty, he might have created the World many thousand Years before that, so that it might have been at this Day of ten hundred times ten thousand Years standing, and he might have given it as many Years as there are Numbers of Men and Angels, Beasts, yea, and Pickles of Sand upon the Sea-coast; But it was his good Pleasure, that that very Point of Time in which it was created should be the Beginning of Time, and from that he gives us a History of the World, upon which the Church of God may rest, and so seek no other God but the God that made these Heavens and Earth.

This will not satisfy the ungodly Curiosity and Vanity of Mens Spirits, who will reproach the Maker for not applying sooner to his Work, and sitting idle such an unmeasurable Space of Eternity. Men wonder what he could be doing all that Time, (if we may call it Time which hath no Beginning) and how he was imployed: I beseech you restrain such Thoughts in you with the Fear of his glorious and incomprehensible Majesty, who gives no Account of his Matters: It is enough that this is his good Pleasure to begin then; and he conceals his Reasons, to prove the Sobriety of our Faith, that all Men may learn an absolute and simple stouping to his Majesty's Pleasure. Remember that which a godly Man answered some wanton curious Wit, who in scorn demanded the same of him, *He was preparing Hell for curious and proud Fools*, said he; Let us then keep our Hearts as with a Bridle, and repress their boundless Wandrings within Bounds, lest we by looking upward, before the Beginning of the World, to see what God was doing, fall head-long into the eternal Pit of Destruction, and into the Hands of the living

living God. God hath shewed himself marvellously these six thousand Years in the upholding this World: If we did consider these continued and repeated Testimonies of his Glory, we would be overwhelmed with what we find, though we search no further; and suppose we would please our selves to imagine, that it had been created many Years before, yet that doth not silence and stop the Insolence of Mens Minds, for it always might be enquired, What the Lord was doing before that Time? For Eternity is as immense before those multiplied Thousands of Years as before naked six; let our Imagination sit down to substract from Eternity as many Thousands as it can multiply by all the Varieties and Numbers in the World, yet there is nothing abated from Eternity, it is as infinite in Extent before that, as before the present six thousand: and yet we may conceive, that the Lord hath purposed in the Beginning of the World to declare more manifestly to our Understanding his Eternity, his Self-sufficiency and Liberty; his Eternity, that when we hear of how short standing the Creature is, we may go upward to God himself, and his everlasting Being before the Foundations of it were laid, may shine forth more brightly to our Admiration, when we can stretch our Conceptions so immensurably as far beyond the Beginning of the World; and yet God is still beyond the outmost Reach of our Imagination, (for who can find out the Beginning of that which hath not a Beginning to be found out) and our most extended Apprehensions fall infinitely short of the Days of the Ancient of Days; O how glorious then must his Being be, and how boundless? His Self-sufficiency and Perfection doth herein appear, that from such an unconceivable Space he was as perfect and blessed in himself as now, the Creatures add nothing to his Perfection, or Satisfaction; he was as well pleased with his own all-comprehending Being, and with the very Thought and Purpose of making this World, at now he is when it is made; the Idea of it in his Mind gave him as great Contentment as the Work it self when it is done. O, to conceive this aright, it would fill a Soul with astonishing and ravishing Thoughts of his Blessedness: Poor Men weary if they be not one Way or other imployed without; so indigent are all Creatures at home, that they would weary if they went not abroad without themselves; but to think how absolutely God is well pleased with himself, and how all imaginable Perfections can add nothing to his eternal Self-complacency and Delight in his own Being, it would certainly ravish a Soul to Delight in God also: And as his Self-sufficiency doth herein appear, so his Liberty and Freedom is likewise manifested in it. If the World had been eternal, Who would have thought that it was free for his Majesty to make it or not? But that it had flowed from his glorious Being with as natural and necessary a Resultance, as Light from the Body of the Sun? But now it appears to all Men, that for his Pleasure they are made and were created, that it was simply the free and absolute Motion of his Will, that gave an Being to all Things, which he could withhold at his Pleasure, or so long as he pleased.

Thirdly, We have it to consider, in what Condition he made all these Things, *very Good*, and that to declare his Goodness and Wisdom; The Creature may well be called, a large Volume extended and spread out before the Eyes of all Men, to be seen and read of all. It contains

if these Things, all of them in their Orders and Harmonies, or any of them in their Beings and Qualities, were considered in Relation to God's Majesty, they would teach and instruct the Fool and the wise Man both in the Knowledge of God. How many Impressions hath he made in the Creatures which reflect upon any seeing Eye the very Image of God: To consider of what a vaste and huge Frame the Heavens and the Earth are, and yet but one Throne to his Majesty, the Foot-stool whereof is this Earth, wherein vain Men erect many Palaces; To consider, what a Multitude of Creatures, what Variety of Fowls in the Heaven, and what Multiplicity of Beasts upon the Earth, what Armies (as *Moses* speaks *Gen.* ii. 1.) and yet that none of them all are useless, but all of them have some special Ends and Purposes they serve for; so, that there is no Discord nor Disorder, no Superfluity nor Want in all this Monarchy of the World; all of them conspire together in such a Discord, or disagreeing Harmony, to one great Purpose, to declare the Wisdom of him who *made every Thing beautiful in its Time*, and every Thing most fit and apposite for the Use it was created for; so, that *the whole Earth is full of his Goodness*: He makes every Creature good one to another, to supply one another's Necessities; and then notwithstanding of so many different Natures and Dispositions between Elements, and things composed of them, yet all these Contrarieties have such a Commixtion, and are so moderated by supream Art, that they make up joyntly one excellent and sweet Harmony or beautiful Proportion in the World: O, how wise must he be who alone contrived it all? We can do nothing except we have some Pattern and Copy before us; but now upon this Ground which God hath laid, Man may fancy many Superstructures; But when he stretched out the Heaven, and laid the Foundation of the Earth, *Who being his Counsellour taught him?* At whom did his Spirit take Counsel? Certainly, none of all these Things would have entred into the Heart of Man to consider or contrive, *Isa.* xl. 12, 13. Some ruder Spirits do gaze upon the huge and prodigious Pieces of the Creation, as Whales, and Elephants, *&c.* But a wise *Solomon* will go to the School of the Ant to learn the Wisdom of God, and choose out such a simple and mean Creature for the Object of his Admiration; certainly, there are Wonders in the smallest and most inconsiderable Creatures which Faith can contemplate: O the curious Ingeny and Draught of the Finger of God, in the Composition of Flies, Bees, Flowers, *&c.* Men ordinarily admire more some extraordinary Things; but the Truth is, the whole Course of Nature is one continued Wonder, and that greater than any of the Lord's Works without the Line; the straight and regular Line of the Wisdom of God (who in one constant Course and Tenor hath ordained the Actions of all his Creatures) comprehends more Wonders and Mysteries, as the Course of the Sun, the Motion of the Sea, the hanging of the Earth in the empty Place upon nothing; these we say, are the Wonders indeed, and comprehend something in them which all the Wonders of *Egypt* and the Wilderness cannot parallel. But it is the stupid Security of Men, that are only awakened by some new and unusuall Passages of God's Works, beyond that straight Line of Nature.

Then, *Fourthly*, Look upon the Power of God in making all of nothing, which is expressed here in *Heb.* xi. There is

no Artificer but he must have Matter, or his Art will fail him, and he can do nothing: The Mason must have Timber and Stones laid to his Hand, or he cannot build a House; the Gold-smith must have Gold or Silver ere he can make a Cup or a Ring; take the most curious and quick Inventer of them all, they must have some Matter to work upon, or their Knowledge is no better than Ignorance; all that they can do, is, to give some Shape or Form, or to fashion that in some new Model which had a Being before; so, that whatever Men have done in the World, their Works are all made up of these Things which appear, and Art and Skill to form and fashion that excellently, which before was in another Mould and Fashion; but He needs not sit idle for want of Materials, because he can make his Materials; and therefore, in the Beginning he made Heaven and Earth, not as they now are, but he made first the Matter and Substance of this Universe, but it was as yet a rude and confused *Chaos* or Mass, all in one Lump without Difference; but then his Majesty shews his Wisdom and Art, his excellent Invention, in the following Days of the Creation, in ordering, and beautifying, and forming the World as it is, and that his Power might be the more known; For, how easy is it for him to do all this? There needs no more for it but a Word, Let it be, and it is, *He spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast*; Not a Word pronounced, and audibly composed of Letters and Syllables, mistake it not so, but a Word inwardly formed, as it were, in his infinite Spirit, even the Inclination and Beck of his Will suffices for his great Work: Ye see what Labour and Pains we have in our Business, how we toil and sweat about it, what Wrestlings and Strivings in all Things we do; but behold what a great Work is done without Pain and Travel! It is a laborious Thing to travel through a Parcel of this Earth, which is yet but as the point of the Universe; It is troublesome to lift or carry a little Piece of Stone or Clay; it's a Toil even to look upward and number the Stars of Heaven, but it was no Toil, no difficult Thing to his Majesty to stretch out these Heavens in such an infinite Compass; for as large as the Circumference of them is, yet it is as easie to him to compass them, as it is to us to span a Finger-length or two; It is no Difficulty to him to take up Hills and Mountains as the Dust of the Ballance in his Hand, and weigh them in Scales. Hath he not chained the vast and huge Mass of the weighty Earth and Sea in the midst of the empty Place without a Supporter, without Foundations or Pillars? *He hangeth it on nothing.* What is it I pray you, that supports the Clouds? Who is it that binds up their Waters in such a Way that the Clouds are not rent under them, even though there be more Abundance of Water in them than is in all the Rivers and Waters round about us? *Job* xxvi. 7, 8. Who is it that restrains and sets bounds to the Sea, that the Waters thereof, tho' they roar, yet do not overflow the Land? But this Almighty *Jehovah*, whose Decree and Commandment is the very Compass, the Bulwark over which they cannot flow, and all this he doth with more Facility than Men can speak; If there were a Creature that could do all Things by speaking, that were a strange Power: But yet that Creature might be wearied of speaking much; *but he speaks, and it is done*; his Word is a creating Word of Power, which makes Things that are not to be, and there is no wearying

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of him besides, for he is Almighty, and cannot faint; but, Why then did he take six Days for his Work? Might he not with one Word of his Power have commanded this World to issue out of his omnipotent Vertue thus perfect as it is? What needed all this Compass? Why took he six Days, who in a Moment could have done it all with as much Facility? Indeed, herein the Lord would have us to adore his Wisdom as well as his Power; he proceeds from more imperfect Things to more perfect, from a confused *Chaos* to a beautiful World, from Motion to Rest, to teach Man to walk through this Wilderness and Valley of Tears, this shapeless World, into a more beautiful Habitation, through the Tossings of Time, into an eternal Sabbath of Rest, whither their Works shall follow them, and they shall rest from their Labours: He would teach us to take a stedfast Look of his Work, and that we should be buried all the Days of our Pilgrimage and Sojourning, in the Consideration of the glorious Characters of God upon the Works of his Hands; we see that it is but passing Looks and Glances of God's Glory we take in the Creatures, but the Lord would have us to make it our Work and Business all the Week through, as it was his, to make them. He would in this teach us his loving Care of Men, who would not create Man till he had made for him so glorious an House, replenished with all good Things; it had been a darksome and irksome Life to have lived in the first *Chaos*, without Light, but he hath stretched over him the Heavens as his Tent, and set Lights in them to distinguish Times and Seasons, and ordained the Waters their proper Bounds, and peculiar Channels, and then maketh the Earth to bring forth all manner of Fruits; and when all is thus disposed, then he creates Man. To this God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, be Glory and Praise.

Heb. xi. 3. *Through Faith we understand that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that Things which are seen were not made of Things which do appear.*

And Heb. i. 14. *Are they not all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation?*

THERE is nothing more generally known than this, That God at the Beginning made the Heaven and the Earth, and all the Host of them, the upper or the celestial, the lower or sublunary World; but yet there is nothing so little believed or laid to Heart: *By Faith we understand that the Worlds were made.* It is one of the first Articles of the Creed indeed; *Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth;* but I fear that Creed is not written in the Tables of Flesh, that is, the Heart. There is a twofold Mistake among Men about the Point of believing; some, and the commoner Sort, do think it is no other than simply to know such a Thing, and not to question it, to hear it, and not to contradict it, or object against it; Therefore they do flatter themselves in their own Eyes, and do account themselves

selves to have Faith in God; because they can say over all the Articles of their Belief, they think the Word is true, and they never doubted of it; But, I beseech you, consider how greatly you mistake a main Matter of weighty Concernment. If you will search it, as before the Lord, you will find you have no other Belief of these Things than Children use to have, whom you teach to think or say any Thing; there is no other Ground of your not questioning these Truths of the Gospel, but because you never consider on them, and so they pass for current; do not deceive your selves, *with the Heart Man believes*; it is a Heart-business, a Soul-matter, no light and useless Opinion, or empty Expression which you have learned from a Child. You say, you believe in God the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and so say Children who doubt no more of it than ye, and yet in Sadness they do not retire within their own Hearts to think what a One he is; they do not remember him in the Works of his Hands, there is no more Remembrance of that true God than if no such Thing were known: So it is among you, you would think we wronged you, if we said, ye believed not that God made the World; and yet certainly, all Men have not this Faith, whereby they understand truly in their Heart the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God appearing in it, that is the Gift of God only given to them that shall be saved. If I should say, that you believe not the most common Principles of Religion, you will think it hard, and yet there is no Doubt of it, that the most common Truths are least believed; and the Reason is plain, because Men have learned them by Tongue, and there is none that question them, and therefore very few ever in Sadness and in earnest consider of them. You say, that God made Heaven and Earth, but how often do you think on that God? And, how often do you think on him with Admiration? Do ye at all wonder at the Glory of God when you gaze on his Works? Is not this Volume always obversant before your Eyes, every Thing shewing and declaring this glorious Maker, yet who is it that taketh more Notice of him than if he were not at all; such is the general Stupidity of Men, that they never ponder and digest these Things in their Heart till their Soul receive the Stamp of the Glory and Greatness of the invisible God, which shines most brightly in these Things that are visible, and be in some Measure transformed in their Minds, and conformed to these glorious Appearances of him, which are engraven in great Characters in all that do at all appear. There is another Mistake peculiar to some, especially the Lord's People, that they think Faith is limited to some few particular and more unknown and hid Truths and Mysteries of the Gospel. Ye think, that it is only true Believing, to embrace some special Gospel-truths, which the Multitude of People know nothing of, as the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace and Works, &c. And for other common Principles, of God's making and ruling the World, you think that a common Thing to believe them. But saith the Apostle, *By Faith we understand that the Worlds were made*, it is that same Faith spoken of in the End of *Chap.* x. by which the *just shall live*. So then, here is a Point of saving Faith, to believe with the Heart in God the Creator and Father Almighty, to take a View of God's Almighty Power, and sufficient Goodness, and infinite Wisdom shining in the Fabrick of the World, and that with Delight and Admiration at such a glorious Fountain-being; to rise up to

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his Majesty by the Degrees of his Creatures; this is the climbing and aspiring Nature of Faith. You see how much those Saints in the Old Testament were in this; and certainly, they had more excellent and beseeming Thoughts of God than we. It should make Christians ashamed, that both Heathens who had no other Book opened to them, but that of Nature, did read it more diligently than we; And that the Saints of Old, who had not such a plain Testimony of God as we now have, yet did learn more out of the Book of the Creature, then we do both out of it and the Scriptures: We look on all Things with such a careless Eye, and do not observe what may be found of God in them: I think verily there are many Christians, and Ministers of the Gospel, who do not ascend into those high and ravishing Thoughts of God, in his Being and working, as would become even meer Naturalists; How little can they speak of his Majesty, or think, as it becomes his transcendant Glory. There is little in Sermons or Discourses that holds out any singular admiring Thoughts of a Deity, but in all these we are so common and careless, as if He were an Idol.

It is not in vain that it is expressed thus, *By Faith we know that the Worlds were made*, for certainly the firm believing and pondering of this one Truth, would be of great Moment and Use to a Christian in all his Journey. You may observe in what stead it is to the Saints in Scripture: This raises up a Soul to high Thoughts, and suitable Conceptions of his glorious Name, and so conforms the Worship of his Majesty unto his Excellency, it puts the Stamp of Divinity upon it, and spiritualizes the Thoughts and Affections so, as to put a true Difference between the true God, and the Gods that made not the Heavens and the Earth. Alas, the Worship of many Christians speaks out no diviner or higher Object than a Creature; it is so cold, so formal, and empty, so vain and wandring, there is no more Respect testified unto him, than we would give to some eminent Person: You find in the Scripture how the Strain of the Saints Affections and Devotion rises, when they take up God in his absolute Supremacy above the Creatures, and look on him as the alone Fountain of all that is worth the Name of Perfection in them. A Soul in that Consideration cannot chuse but assign unto him the most eminent Seat in the Heart, and gather those Affections which are scattered after the Creatures, into one Channel, to pour them out on him who is all in all, and hath all that which is lovely in the Creatures in an eminent Degree. Therefore know what you are formed for, to shew forth his Praise, to gather and take up from the Creatures all the Fruits of his Praise, and offer them up to his Majesty: This was the End of Man, and this is the End of a Christian, you are made for this, and you were redeemed for this, to read upon the Volumes of his Works, and Word, and from thence extract Songs of Praise to his Majesty.

As this would be of great Moment to the right worshipping of God, and to the Exercise of true Holiness; so it is most effectual to the establishing of a Soul in the Confidence of the Promises of God. When a Soul by Faith understands the World was made by God, then it relyes with Confidence upon that same Word of God, as a Word of Power, and hopes against Hope: There are many Things in the Christian's Way betwixt him and Glory, which look as insuperable: Thou

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art often emptied into nothing, and ſtript naked of all Encouragements, and there is nothing remaining but the Word of God's Promiſes to thee and to the Church, which ſeems contrary to Senſe and Reaſon; Now, I ſay, if thou do indeed believe that the World was made by God, then out of all Queſtion thou may ſilence all thy Fears with this one Thought, God created this whole Frame out of nothing, he commanded the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs, then certainly he can give a Being to his own Promiſes; is not his Word of Promiſe as ſure and effectual as his Word of Command? This is the grand Encouragement of the Church, both offered by God, from *Iſa.* Chap. xl. and made uſe of by his Saints, as *David, Hezekiah,* &c. What is it would diſquiet a Soul if it were repoſed on this Rock of creating Power and Faithfulneſs? This would always ſound in its Ears, faint not; weary not *Jacob, I am God, and none elſe, the Portion of Jacob is not like others,* be it inward or outward Difficulties, ſuppoſe Hell and Earth combined together, let all the Enemies of a Soul, or of the Church aſſemble, here is one for all, the God that made the Heaven and the Earth can ſpeak, *and it is done,* command, *and it ſtands faſt! He creates Peace, and who then can make Trouble,* when he gives Quietneſs to a Nation, or to a Perſon. Almighty Power works in Saints, and for Saints, let us truſt in Him.

Gen. i. 26, 27. *And God ſaid, Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeneſs: And let them have Dominion over the Fiſh of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over the Cattle, and over all the Earth, and over ever creeping Thing that creepeth upon the Earth. So God created Man in his own Image, in the Image of God created he him, Male and Female created he them.* With *Eph.* iv. 24. *And that ye put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.* And Heb. iii. 10. *Wherefore I was grieved with that Generation, and ſaid, They do always err in their Hearts, and they have not known my Ways.*

WHILE we deſcend from the Meditation of the Glory of God ſhining in the Heavens, in Sun, Moon, and Stars, unto the Conſideration of the Lord's framing of Man after this Manner, we may fall into Admiration with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſa.* viii. *Lord what is Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou ſhouldſt remember him.* It might indeed drown us in Wonder, and aſtoniſh us, to think what ſpecial Notice he hath taken of ſuch a Creature from the very Beginning, and put more reſpect upon him than upon all the more excellent Works of his Hands. You find here the Creation of Man expreſſed in other Terms, than was uſed before; He ſaid, *Let there be Light, and it was, let there*

be dry Land, &c. But it is not such a simple Word as that, *but let us make Man according to our Image*; as if God had called a Consultation about it. What was there any more Difficulty in this than in the rest of his Works? Needed he any Advisement about his Frame and Constitution? No certainly, for there was as great Work of Power, as curious Pieces of Art and Wisdom, which were instantly done upon his Word. He is not a Man that he should advise or consult: As there is no Difficulty nor Impediment in the Way of his Power, (He doth all that he pleases, *ad nutum*, at his very Word or Nod, so easie are Impossiblities to him;) so there is nothing hard to his Wisdom, no Knot but it can loose, nothing so curious or exquisite, but he can as curiously contrive it, as the most common and gross Pieces of the Creation; and therefore, *He is wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in working*. But ye have here expressed, as it were, a Counsel of the Holy and Blessed Trinity about Man's Creation, to signify to us, what peculiar Respect he puts upon that Creature, and what special Notice he takes of us, that of his own free Purpose and good Pleasure he was to single and choose out Man from among all other Creatures, for the more eminent Demonstration of his glorious Attributes of Grace, Mercy, and Justice upon him; and likewise to point out the Excellency that God did stamp upon Man in his Creation beyond the rest of the Creatures, as the Apostle shows the Excellency of Christ above Angels, *To which of the Angels said he at any Time, thou art my Son*, Heb. i. 5. So we may say, of which of the Creatures said he at any Time, come, let us make them in our Image after our Likeness? O how should this make us listen to hear, earnest to know what Man once was, how magnified of God, and set above the Works of his Hands? There is a great Desire in Men to search into their Original, and to trace backward the dark Foot-steps of Antiquity, especially if they be put in Expectation of attaining any honourable or memorable Extraction? How will Men love to hear of the Worth of their Ancestors? But what a Stupidity doth possess the most Part, in Relation to the high Fountain and Head of all, that they do not aim so high as *Adam*, to know the very Estate of humane Nature: Hence it is that the most Part of People ly still astonished, or rather stupid and senseless, after this great Fall of Man, because they never look upward to the Place and Dignity from whence Man did fall. It is certain, you will never rightly understand your selves, or what ye are, till ye know first what Man was made? You cannot imagine what your present Misery is, till you once know what that Felicity was in which Man was made (*let us make Man in our Image*;) some have called Man μικροκοσμον, a little World, a Compend of the World, because he hath Heaven and Earth as it were married together in him; two most remote and distant Natures, the Dust of the Earth, and the immortal Spirit, which is called the Breath of God, sweetly linked and conjoyned together, with a Disposition and Inclination one to another. The Lord was in this Piece of Workmanship as it were to give a narrow and short Compend of all his Works, and so did associate in one Piece with marvellous Wisdom, Being, Living, Moving, Sense, and Reason, which are scattered abroad in the other Creatures, so that a Man carries these Wonders about with him, which he admires with-

out him. At his bare and simple Word, this huge Frame of the World started out of nothing: But in this, he acts the Part of a cunning Artificer, *Let us make Man*, he makes rather than creates, first raises the Walls of Flesh, builds the House of the Body with all its Organs, all its Rooms, and then he puts in a noble and divine Guest to dwell in it, *He breathes in it the Breath of Life*, he incloses as it were an Angel within it, and marries these together in the most admirable Union and Communion, that can be imagined, so that they make up one Man.

But that which the Lord looks most into in this Work, and would have us most to consider, is that Image of himself that he did imprint on Man (*let us make Man in our own Image*:) There was no Creature but it had some Engravings of God upon it, some curious Draughts and Lineaments of his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness upon it, and therefore the Heavens are said, *to shew forth his Glory*, &c. But what ever they have, it is but the lower Part of that Image, some dark Shadows and Resemblances of him: But that which is the last of his Works, he makes it *according to his own Image, tanquam ab ultima manu*, he therein gives out himself to be read and seen of all Men as in a Glass; other Creatures are made as it were according to the Similitude of his Foot-step, *ad similitudinem vestigii*, but Man, *ad similitudinem faciei*, according to the Likeness of his Face, (*in our Image after our Likeness*.) It is true there is only, Jesus Christ his Son, who is *the Brightness of his Glory, and the express substantial Image of his Person*, who resembles him perfectly, and throughly in all Properties, so that he is *alter idem*, another-self both in Nature, Properties, and Operations, so like him that he is one with him, so that it is rather an *Oneness*, than a Likeness; but Man he created according to his own Image, and gave him to have some Likeness to himself, Likeness I say, not *Sameness* or *Oneness*. That is high indeed, to be like God, the Notion and Expression of it imports some strange Thing: How could Man be like God, who is infinite, incomprehensible, whose Glory is not communicable to another? It is true indeed, in those incommunicable Properties he hath not only no Equal, but none to liken him; in these he is to be adored, and admired as infinitely transcending all created Perfections and Conceptions; but yet in others he has been pleased to hold forth himself to be imitated and followed: And that this might be done, he first stamps them upon Man in his first Moulding of him; and if ye would know what these are particularly, the Apostle expresses them, Eph. iv. 24, *in Knowledge, in Righteousness and true Holiness*, Col. iii. 10. This is the *Image of him who created him*, which the Creator stamped on Man, that he might seek him, and set him apart for himself to keep Communion with him, and to bless him. There is a Spirit given to Man with a Capacity to know, and to will: And here is a Draught and Lineament of God's Face, which is not engraven on any sensitive Creature; It is one of the most noble and excellent Operations of Life, in which a Man is most above Beasts, to reflect upon himself, and to know himself and his Creator; There are natural Instincts given to other Things, natural Propensions to those Things that are convenient to their own Nature, but none of them have so much as a Capacity to know what they are, or what they have, they cannot frame a Notion of him who gave them a Being, but are only proportionate to the discerning of some sensible Things, and can reach no fur-

further: He hath limited the Eye within Colours, and Light; he hath set a Bound to the Ear, that it cannot act without Sounds; and so to every Sense he hath assigned its own proper Stanse, in which it moves; but he teaches Man Knowledge, and he inlarges the Sphere of his Understanding beyond visible or sensible Things, to Things invisible, to Spirits; and this Capacity he has put in the Soul to know all Things, and it self among the rest; the Eye discerns Light, but sees not it self, but he gives a Spirit to Man to know himself, and his God; and then, there is a willing Power in the Soul, by which it diffuses it self towards any Thing that is conceived as good; the Understanding directing, and the Will commanding according to its Direction, and then the whole Faculties and Senses obeying such Commands, which makes up an excellent Draught of the Image of God: There was a sweet Proportion and Harmony in *Adam*, all was in due Place and Subordination; the Motions of immortal Man did begin within, the Lamp of Reason did shine and give Light to it, and till that went before, there was no stirring, no chusing, no refusing, and when Reason which was one Sparkle of the divine Nature, or a Ray of God's Light reflected into the Soul of Man, when once that did appear to the discerning of Good and Evil, this Power was in the Soul, to apply the whole Man accordingly, to choose the Good and refuse the Evil: It had not been a lively Resemblance of God to have a Power of knowing and willing simply, unless these had been beautified and adorned with supernatural and divine Graces of spiritual Light, and Holiness, and Righteousness; these make up the lively Colour, and compleat the Image of God upon the Soul.

There was a Divine Light which did shine in upon the Understanding, ever till Sin interposed and ecclipsed it, and from the Light of God's Countenance did the sweet Heat, and Warmness of Holiness and Uprightness in the Affections proceed, so that there was nothing but Purity and Cleanness in the Soul, no Darkness of Ignorance, no Muddiness of carnal Affections, but the Soul pure and transparent, to receive the refreshing and enlightning Rays of God's glorious Countenance, and this was the very Face and Beauty of the Soul, it is that only that is the Beauty and Excellency of the Creature, Conformity to God, and this was throughout, in Understanding and Affections, the Understanding conformed to his Understanding, discerning between Good and Evil; and conformed it behoved to be, for it was but a Ray of that Sun, a Stream of that Fountain of Wisdom, and a Light derived from that primitive Light of God's Understanding; and then the Will did sympathize as much with his Will, approving and chusing what he approved, and refusing that which he hated: *Idem velle atque idem nolle, ea demum firma est amicitia*, that was the Conjunction, and it is more strict than any Tye among Men, there was not two Wills, they were as it were one, the Love of God reflecting into the Soul, did as it were carry the Soul back again unto him, and that was the conforming Principle which fashioned the whole Man without and within, to his Likeness, and to his Obedience: Thus Man was formed for Communion with God, this Likeness behoved to be, or they could not joyn as Friends.

But now this calls us to a sad Meditation, to think from whence we have fallen, and so how great our Fall is; to fall from such a blessed Estate, that must be

be great Misery: Satan hath spoiled us of our rich Treasure, that glorious Image of Holiness. And hath drawn upon our Souls the very Visage of Hell, the Lineaments of this hellish Countenance, but the most Part of Men ly stupid, insensible of any Thing, as Beasts that are felled with their Fall, that can neither find Pain nor rise; if we could but return and consider what are all those sad and woful Consequences of Sin in the World, what a strange Distemper it hath put in the Creation; What Miseries that one Fall hath brought on all Mankind? I am sure by these Bruises we might conjecture what a strange Fall it hath been. Sin did interpose between God and us, and this darkned our Souls, and killed them, the Light of Knowledge was put out, and the Life of Holiness extinguished, and now there remains nothing of all that stately Building; but some Ruines of common Principles of Reason, and Honesty engraven on all Mens Consciences, which may shew unto us what the Building hath been; we have fallen from Holiness, and so from Happiness, our Souls are deformed and defiled; you see what an ill favoured Thing it is, to see a Child wanting any Members. O if Sin were visible, how ugly would the Shape of the Soul be to us, since it lost the very Proportion and Visage of it, that is, God's Image? Let us consider this Doctrine, that we may know from whence we have fallen, and into what a Gulf of Sin and Misery we have fallen, that the new News of Jesus Christ a Mediator and Redeemer of fallen Man, may be sweet unto us. Thus it pleased the Lord to let his Image be marred and quite spoyled in us, for he had this Design to repair it, and renew it better than of Old, and for this End he hath created Christ according to his Image, he hath stamped that Image of Holiness upon his Flesh, to be a Pattern, and not only so, but a Pledge also, of restoring such Souls as flee unto him for Refuge, unto that primitive Glory and Excellency: Know then that he hath made his Son like unto us, that we might again be made like unto him; he said, let one of us be made Man, in the Counsel of Redemption, that so it might again be said, let Man be made like unto us, in our Image: It is a second Creation must do it, and O that you would look upon your Hearts to enquire if it be framed in you: Certainly you must again be created into that Image if you belong to Christ. To him be Praise and Glory.

Rom. xi. 36. *For of him, and through him, and to him are all Things; to whom be Glory for ever. Amen.* Psal. ciii. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens: And his Kingdom ruleth over all.* Mat. x. 29. *Are not two Sparrows sold for a Farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the Ground without your Father.*

THERE is nothing more commonly confessed in Words, than that the Providence of God reaches to all the Creatures and their Actions; But I believe there is no Point of Religion so superficially and slightly considered by the most Part of Men: The most Part ponder none of these divine Truths, there is no-

nothing above their Senſes which is the Subject of their Meditations: And for the Children of God, I fear many do give ſuch Truths of God too common and coarſe Entertainment in their Minds, through a Conceit of the Commonneſs of them. I know not what we are taken up with in this Age, with ſome particular Truths more remote from the Knowledge of others in former Times, or ſome particular Caſes concerning our ſelves: You will find the moſt Part of Chriſtians ſtretch not their Thoughts beyond their own Conditions or Intereſts, or ſome particular Queſtions, about Faith and Repentance, &c. And in the mean Time the moſt weighty Points of Religion, which have been the Subject of the Meditation and Admiration of Saints in all Ages, are wholly laid aſide through a Miſapprehenſion of their Commonneſs, as if a Man would deſpiſe the Sun and the Air, and prefer ſome rare Piece of Stone or Timber to them. Certainly, as in the Diſpoſal of the World, the Lord hath in great Wiſdom and Goodneſs made the moſt needful and uſeful Thing moſt common; thoſe, without which Man cannot live, are always obvious to us, ſo that if any Thing be more rare, it is not neceſſary: So in this Univerſe of Religion, he in Mercy and Wiſdom hath ſo framed all, that thoſe Points of Truth and Belief, which are moſt near the Subſtance of Salvation, and neceſſary to it, and moſt fit to exerciſe us in true Godlineſs, theſe are every where to be found, partly engraven on Mens Hearts, partly ſet down moſt clearly and often in Scripture, that a believing Soul can look no where but it muſt breathe in that Air of the Goſpel, and look upon that common Sun of Righteouſneſs, God the Creator, and the healing Sun, Chriſt the Redeemer, ſhining every where in Scripture. The general Providence of God and the ſpecial Adminiſtration of Chriſt the Saviour, theſe are common, and theſe are eſſential to our happineſs; therefore the Meditation of Chriſtians ſhould run moſt upon them, and not always about ſome particular Queſtions or Debates of the Time. It is a ſtrange Thing how People ſhould be more affected with a Diſcourſe on the Affairs of the Time, or on ſome inward Thoughts of their own Hearts, than if one ſhould ſpeak of God's univerſal Kingdom over all Men and Nations; that is accounted a general and ordinary Diſcourſe; even, as if Men would ſet at nought the Sun's Light, becauſe it ſhines to all, and every Day; or would deſpiſe the Water, becauſe it may be found every where: Let the Sun be removed for ſome few Days, and O what would the World account of it beyond all your curious Devices or rare Enjoyments. This is it which would increaſe to more true Godlineſs, if rightly believed, than many other Things ye are buſied withall. It's our general View of them makes them but general. I ſpoke once upon this Word, *Rom.* xi. 36. but only in reference to the End of Man, which is God's Glory; but the Words do extend further, and we muſt now conſider what further they hold forth. The Apoſtle hath been ſpeaking of the Lord's unſearchable Ways and Judgments towards Men in the Diſpenſation of Grace and Salvation, how free and how abſolute he is in that. And this he ſtrengthens by the ſupreme Wiſdom of God, *Who did direct him*; Why doſt thou, Man, take upon thee to direct him now? For, where was there any Counſellor when he alone contrived all the Frame of this World, and then by ſovereign Highneſs and Supremacy over the Creatures diſpoſed of them?

For

For he is Debitor to none, therefore none can quarrel him for giving or not giving, for who was it that gave him first, for which he should give a Recompence? Was there any could prevent him with a Gift? Nay, none could, saith he, *for of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all Things*: And therefore he must prevent Men. For from whence should that Gift of the Creature, which could oblige him, have its Rise? It must be of God if it be a Creature, and therefore he is in no Man's Common, He must give it ere we have it to give him again.

The Words are most comprehensive, they comprehend all Things, and that is very large: There is nothing without this Compass, and they comprehend all the Dependance of Things. Things depend upon that which made them, that which preserves them, and that for which they are made. All Things depend on him as their producing Cause, that first gives them a Being: *For of Him are all Things*; they also depend on him as their conserving Cause, who continues their Being by that self-same Influence wherewith he gave it, *for through him are all Things*: And then they depend on him as their final Cause, for whose Glory they are, and are continued, for, *for Him are all Things*. Thus you have the Beginning, the Continuance, and the End of the whole Creation: This Word may lead us through all: From God as the Beginning, the *Alpha* and Original of their Being: Through God as the only Supporter, Confirmer, and Upholder of their Being: And unto God as the very End for which they have their Being. Now, to travel within this Compass, to walk continually within this Circle, and to go along this blessed Round; to begin at God, and to go along all our Way with him, till we arrive and end at God; and thus to do continually in the Journey of Meditation, when it surveys any of his Works, this were, indeed, the very proper Work, and the special Happiness Man was created for; And, I may say, a great Part of that for which a Christian is created for: Again, there would be nothing more powerful to the comforming of a Soul to God, and to his Obedience and Fear, than this, to have that Perswasion firmly rooted in the Heart, *That of God are all Things*: That whatever it be, Good or Evil, that befalls us, or others; whatever we observe in the World, that is the Subject of the Thoughts and Discourses of Men, and turns Mens Eyes after them, that all that is of God; that is, it is in the World, it's started out of nothing at his Command; it is, because his Power gave it a Being: And in this Consideration to overlook, and, in a manner, forget all second Causes; to have such affecting and up-taking Thoughts of the first Principle of all these Motions, as to regard the lower Wheels, that are next us, no more than the Hand or the Sword that a Man strikes us with; as if these second Causes had no Influence of their own, but were merely acted and moved by this supream Power, as if God did nothing by them, but only at their Presence. We should so labour to look on those Things he doth by Creatures, as if he did them alone without the Creatures, as if he were this Day creating a World: Certainly, the solid Faith of God's Providence will draw off the Covering of the Creature, and espy the secret Almighty Power which acts in every Thing to bring forth his good Pleasure concerning them: And then to consider, with that same Seriousness of Meditation, that same everlasting Arm which made them,

them, is under them to ſupport them; that the moſt noble and excellent Creatures are but Streams, Rays, Images, and Shadows of God's Majeſty, which as they have their Being by Derivation, ſo they have their Continuance by that ſame continued Influence; ſo that if he would interpoſe between himſelf and them, or withdraw his Countenance, or ſtop his Influence, the moſt ſufficient of them all ſhould evaniſh, as the Sun-beams dry up the Streams of a Fountain, and diſappear as the Image of the Glaſs, *Pſal.* cii. 29, 30. O that Place were a pertinent Object of a Chriſtian's Meditation: How much of God is to be preſt out of it by ſerious pondering of it? *Thou hideſt thy Face and they are troubled, thou takeſt away thy Breath and they die, thou ſendeſt out thy Spirit, and they are created.* It is even with the very Being and Faculties of the Creature as with the Image in the Glaſs, which when the Face removes, it's ſeen no more; the Lord, as it were, breathes into them a Being, and when he takes in his Breath they periſh, and when he ſends it out again they are renewed; we do not wonder at the ſtanding of the World; but think, if we had been Witneſſes of the making of it, we would have been filled with Admiration; but certainly, it's only our Stupidity that doth not behold that ſame Wonder continued, for what is the upholding of this by his Power, but a very continued and repeated Creation? Which Influence were able to bring a World out of nothing. If this had not been before the Vertue and Power he imploys now in making them ſubſiſt, that Fame alone without any Addition of Power would have in the Beginning made all this to be of nothing; ſo that the Continuance of the World is nothing elſe but an uninterrupted, and conſtant Flux and Emanation of theſe Things from God, as of Light from the Body of the Sun. And then to meditate how all theſe Things are for him, and his Glory, though we know no Uſe nor End of them, yet that his Majeſty hath appointed them to ſhew forth, one way or other, the Glory of his Name in them; and theſe Things which to our firſt and fooliſh Apprehenſions ſeem moſt contrary to him, and, as it were, to ſpread a Cloud of Darkneſs over his glorious Name, the Sins and preverſe Doings of Men and Angels, the many Diſorders and Confuſions in the World, which ſeem to reflect ſome way upon him; that yet he hath holy and glorious Ends in them all, yea, that himſelf is the End of all: I ſay, to meditate on theſe Things till our Soul received the Stamp of Reverence, and Fear, and Faith in God, this would certainly be the moſt becoming Exerciſe of a Chriſtian, to bring all Things down from God, that we might return and aſcend with all Things again unto God.

This is the moſt ſuitable Employment of a Man, as reaſonable, much more as Chriſtian, that very Duty he was created for. *This People have I formed for my ſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my Praiſe,* Iſa. xliii. 21. And this is the ſhewing forth of his Praiſe, to follow forth the Footſteps of God in the Word, and in the World, and to ponder theſe Paths of divine Power, and Goodneſs, and Wiſdom, and to acknowledge him with our Heart in all theſe. He made many Creatures on which his Glory and Praiſe is ſhewed forth, and he made this Creature Man to ſhew forth that Praiſe, and that Glory which is ſhewed forth in other Creatures. O, but this is a divine Office; it is ſtrange how our Hearts are carried forth towards baſe

baſe Things, and buſied in many vain, impertinent, and baſe Employments, and ſcarce ever mind this great one we were created for.

Certainly, this is the Employment we were made for, to deduce all Things from God till we can again reduce all to him with Glory; to bring all down from his everlaſting Counſels, until we ſend all up to his eternal Glory, together with the Sacrifice of our Hearts; to behold all Things to be *of Him*, that is, of his eternal Counſel and Decree, to have their Riſe in the Boſom of that; and then *through Him*, to proceed out of the Boſom of his Decree and Purpoſe by his Power, *quaſi obſtetricante potentia*, and then to return with all the Praiſe and Glory to his ever glorious Name, *for whom are all Things*. There is none but they will allow God ſome Government in the World; ſome would have him as a King, commanding and doing all by Deputies, and Subſtitutes; ſome would have his Influence general, like the Sun's upon ſublunary Things; but how ſhallow are Mens Thoughts in regard of that which is? God has prepared, indeed, his Throne in the Heaven; that is true, that his Glory doth manifeſt it ſelf in ſome ſtrange and majeſtick Manner above, but the whole Tenour of Scripture ſhews, that he is not ſhut up in Heaven, but that he immediately cares for, governs, and diſpoſes all Things in the World, *for His Kingdom is over all*: It is the Weakneſs of Kings, not their Glory, that they have need of Deputies; it is his Glory, not Baſeneſs, to look to the meaneſt of his Creatures; it is a poor Reſemblance and empty Shadow that Kings have of him; *He rules in the Kingdoms of Men*, and to him belongs the Dominion and the Glory; he deſerves the Name of a King, whoſe Beck Heaven and Earth obeys. Can a King command that the Sea flow not? Can a Parliament act and ordain that the Sun riſe not, or will theſe obey them? Yet at his Decree and Command the Sun is dark, the Sea ſtands ſtill, the Mountains tremble, *at thy rebuke the Sea fled*. Alas! What do we mean that we look upon Creatures, and act our ſelves as if we were independent in our Being and moving? How many Things fall out, and you call them caſual, and attribute them to Fortune? How many Things do the World gaze upon, think upon, and diſcourſe upon, and yet not one Thought, one Word of God all the Time? What more contingent than the Falling of a Sparrow on the Ground? And yet even that is not unexpected to him, but it flows from his Will and Counſel; What leſs taken Notice of or known than the Hairs of your Head? Yet theſe are particularly numbred by him, and ſo no Power in the World can add to them, or diminiſh from them, without his Counſel. O, what would the Belief of this do to raiſe our Hearts to ſuitable Thoughts of God above the Creatures, to encreaſe the Fear, Faith, and Love of God, and to abate from our Fear of Men, and our vain and unprofitable Cares and Perplexities? How would you look upon the Affairs of Men, the Counſels, Contrivances, Endeavours, and Succeſſes of Men, when they are turning Things upſide down, and plotting the Ruin of his People, and eſtabliſhing themſelves alone in the Earth? What would you think of all theſe Revolutions as this Time? Many Souls are aſtoniſhed at them, and ſtand gazing at what is done and to be done; and this is the very Language of your Spirits and Ways, *The Lord hath forſaken the Earth*, the Lord ſeeth not: This is

the Language of our Parliaments and People, they do imagine that they are doing their own Buſineſs, and making all ſure for themſelves: But O, what would a Soul think that could eſcape above them all, and ariſe up to the firſt Wheel of preſent Motions? A Soul that did ſtand upon the exalted Tower of the Word of God, and looked off it by the Proſpect of Faith, would preſently diſcover the Circle in which all theſe Wandrings and Changes are confined, and ſee Men, States, Armies, Nations, and all of them doing nothing but turning about in a Round, (as a Horſe in a Mill) from God's eternal Purpoſe, by his Almighty Power, to his unſpeakable Glory: You might behold all theſe extravagant Motions of the Creatures, incloſed within thoſe Limits, that they muſt begin here, and end here, though themſelves are ſo beaſtly, that they neither know *of whom*, not *for whom* their Counſels and Actions are: Certainly, Satan cannot break without this Compaſs to ſerve his own Humour, Principalites and Powers cannot do it; if they will not glorify him, he ſhall glorify himſelf by them, and upon them.

Gen. ii. 17. *But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it; for in the Day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* Gen. i. 26. *And God ſaid, Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeneſs: And let them have Dominion over the Fiſh of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over the Cattle, and over all the Earth, and over ever creeping Thing that creepeth upon the Earth.*

THE State wherein Man was created at firſt, you heard was exceeding good, all Things very good, and he beſt of all, the choiceſt external and viſible Piece of God's Workmanſhip, made according to the moſt excellent Pattern, *after our Image*. Though it be a Double Miſery to be once happy, yet ſeeing the Knowledge of our Miſery is by the Grace of God made the Entry to a new Happineſs, it is moſt neceſſary to take a View of what Man once was, that we may be more ſenſible of what he now is. You may take up this Image and Likeneſs in three Branches. *Firſt*, There was a ſweet Conformity of the Soul in its Underſtanding, Will, and Affections unto God's Holineſs and Light; A beautiful Light in the Mind, derived from that Fountain-light, by which *Adam* did exactly know both divine and natural Things. What a great Difference doth yet appear between a learned Man and an ignorant rude Perſon, though it be but in Relation to natural Things? The one is but like a Beaſt in Compariſon of the other. O how much more was there between *Adam*'s Knowledge, and that of the moſt learned? The higheſt Advancement of Art and Induſtry in this Life, reaches no further than to a learned Ignorance of the Myſteries in the Works of God, and yet there is a wonderful Sa-

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tisfaction to the Mind in it; but how much ſweet Complacency hath *Adam* had, whoſe Heart was ſo enlarged as to know both Things higher and lower, their Natures, Properties, and Vertues, and ſeveral Operations? No Doubt could trouble him, no Difficulty vex him, no Controverſy or Queſtion perplex him; but above all, the Knowledge of that glorious and eternal Being, that gave him a Being, and infuſed ſuch a Spirit into him; the beholding of ſuch infinite Treaſures of Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Power in him, what an amiable and refreſhful Sight would it be, when there was no Cloud of Sin and Ignorance to interpoſe and eclipſe the full Enjoyment of that increated Light? When the Aſpect of the Sun makes the Moon ſo glorious and beautiful, What may you conceive of *Adam's* Soul framed with a Capacity to receive Light immediately from God's Countenance? How fair and beautiful would that Soul be, until the dark Cloud of Sin did interpoſe it ſelf? Then conſider, what a beautiful Rectitude and Uprightneſs, what a comely Order and Subordination would enſue upon this Light, and make his Will and Affections wonderful Good? *Eccl.* vii. 29. *God made Man upright.* There was no Throw nor Crack in all, all the Powers of the Soul bending upright towards that Fountain of all Goodneſs; now the Soul is crooked and bends downward towards thoſe baſe earthly Things, that is the Abaſement of the Soul; then it looked upright towards God, had no Appetite, no Delight but in him and his Fulneſs, and had the Moon or changeable World under its Feet; there was a Beauty of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, which were the Colours that did perfect and adorn theſe Lineaments of the Image of God, which Knowledge did draw in the Soul: *He was a burning and a ſhining Light*, may be truly ſaid of *Adam*, who had as much Life as Light, as much Delight in God as Knowledge of him; this was the right Conſtitution and Diſpoſition of Man, his Head lifted up in Holineſs and Love towards God, his Arms ſtretched out in Righteouſneſs and Equity towards Man, and all the Affections of the Man under their Command, they could not trouble this Sea with any Tempeſt, becauſe they were under a powerful Commander, who keept them under ſuch Aw and Obedience as the Centurion his Servants, ſaying to one go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh, ſending out Love one Way, holy Hatred another Way. Theſe were as Wings to the Bird to flee upon, as Wheels to the Chariot to run upon, though now it be turned juſt contrary, that the Chariot draws the Coachman, becauſe the Motion is downward. There could be no Motion in an upright Man's Soul till the holy and righteous Will gave out a Sentence upon it; that was the *Primum mobile*, which was turned about it ſelf by ſuch an *Intelligentia* as the Underſtanding. And ſo it was in Chriſt, Affection could not move him, but he did move his own Affections, *He troubled himſelf.* In us the Servant rides on Horſes, and the Prince walks on Foot; and as in a diſtempered Society, the Laws and Ordinances proceed by an unnatural Way, from the Violence of unruly Subjects uſurping over their Maſters. Holy and righteous Man could both raiſe up his Affections, and compoſe them again, they were under ſuch Nurture and Diſcipline; he could have ſaid, Hitherto, and no further, in which there was ſome Reſemblance of God, ruling the raging and unruly Sea; but now, if once they get Entry into our City, they are more power-

ful than the Governor, and will not take Laws from him, but give rather; when we have given Way to our Paſſions, they do next what they pleaſe, not what we permit.

Next his Excellency conſiſted in ſuch an Immunity and Freedom from all Fear of Miſery and Danger, from all Touch of Sorrow or Pain, and did enjoy ſuch an holy Complacency and Delight in his own Eſtate, as made him compleatly happy. In this he was like God. That is his Bleſſedneſs that he is abſolutely well pleaſed in himſelf, that he is without the Reach of Fear and Danger, that none can impair it, none can match it, *I am God and none elſe*, that is Sufficiency of Delight to know himſelf, and his own Sufficiency: Indeed, Man was made changeable, mutably good, that in this he might know God was above him, and ſo might have Ground of Watchfulneſs and Dependance upon him for Continuance of his Happineſs who made him happy: But being made ſo upright, no diſquieting Fear, nor perplexing Care could trouble him. Then *Laſtly*, If you add unto this, holy Satisfaction with his own State and Freedom, the Dominion and Sovereignty he had over the Creatures, as a Conſequent flowing from that Image, you may imagine what a happy Creature he was. Whatſoever Contentment or Satisfaction the Creatures could afford, all of them willingly and pleaſantly would concur to beſtow it upon Man, without his Care or Toil, as if they had accounted it their Happineſs to ſerve him. What more excellent than this Order? Man counting it his Happineſs and Delight to ſerve God, and Creatures eſteeming it their Happineſs to ſerve Man, all Things runnings towards him with all their Goodneſs, as to a common Center; and he returning all to God, from whence they did immediately flow: Thus beſides the Fulneſs and Riches of God's Goodneſs immediately conferred upon Man, he was enriched with all the Store and Goodneſs that the Earth was full of.

God having made Man thus, and furniſhed him after this Manner, he gave him a Law, and then he made a Covenant with him; there was a Law firſt imprinted into *Adam*, and then a Law preſcribed unto him; there was a Law written in his Heart, the Remainder of which *Paul* ſaith makes the Gentiles inexcuſeable; but it was perfectly drawn in him: All the Principles and Notions of good and evil were exactly drawn in it; he had a natural diſcerning of them, and a natural Inclination to all good, and Averſion from all evil: As there is a kind of Law impoſed by God upon other Creatures, which they conſtantly keep, and do not ſwerve from, even his Decree and Commandment, to the Obedience of which they are compoſed and framed; the Sea hath a Law and Command to flow and ebb, and it is that Command that breaks its proud Waves on the Sand, when they threaten to overflow Mountains, the Beaſts obey a Law written in their Natures of eating and drinking, of ſatisfying their Senſes, and every one hath its ſeveral Inſtinct and Propenſion to ſeveral Operations; So God gave a more noble Inſtinct unto Man, ſuitable to his reaſonable Soul, an Inſtinct and Impulſe to pleaſe God, in ſuch Duties of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, a Sympathy with ſuch Ways of Integrity and Godlineſs, and an innate Antipathy againſt ſuch Ways as were diſpleaſing to him, or diſhonourable to the Creature: There is a kind of Comelineſs and ſweet Harmony and Proportion between ſuch Works;

Works, as the Love of God and Man, the Uſe of all for his Glory, of whom all Things are, and Man's reaſonable Being, ſuch a Thing doth ſuit and become it. Again other Things, as the Hatred of God and Men, Neglect and Forgetfulneſs of him, Drunkenneſs and abaſing Luſts of that kind, do diſagree, and are undecent to it. O how happy was *Adam*, when Holineſs and Righteouſneſs were not written on Tables of Stone, but on his Heart, and when there was no Need of external Perſwaſion, but there was an inward Impulſe, inclining him ſtrongly, and laying a kind of ſweet Neceſſity upon him, to that which was both his Duty to God and Men, and his own Dignity and Privilege? This was no Queſtion, the very Beauty of his Soul, to be not only under a Law proper and peculiar to himſelf, but to be inwardly framed and moulded to it, to be a living Law unto himſelf.

But beſides this inward imprinted Law of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, which did without more Rules direct and determine him to that which is in it ſelf good, it pleaſed the Lord to preſcribe and impoſe a poſitive Law unto him, to command him Abſtinence from a Thing neither good nor evil, but indifferent; and ſuch a Thing as of it ſelf he might have done, as well as made uſe of any other Creature; there was no Difference between the Fruit was diſcharged him, and the Fruit of the reſt of the Garden; there was nothing in it did require Abſtinence, and nothing in him either. Yet for moſt wiſe and holy Ends, the Lord enjoins him to abſtain from that Fruit, and puts an Act of Reſtraint upon him, to abridge his Liberty in that which might prove his Obedience, and not hinder his Happineſs, or diminiſh it; becauſe he furniſhed him abundantly beſide. You may perceive two Reaſons of it; one is, that the ſovereign Power and Dominion of God over all Men, may be more eminently held forth, and that viſibly in ſuch a Symbol and Sign. He who put Man in ſuch a well furniſhed Houſe, and placed him in a plentiful and fruitful Garden, reſerves one Tree, *thou ſhalt not eat thereof*, to let *Adam* ſee and know, that he is the ſovereign Owner of all Things, and that his Dominion over the Creatures, and their Service unto him, was not ſo much for any natural Prerogative of Man above them, as out of Divine Bounty and Indulgence, becauſe he had choſen a Creature to himſelf to beautify and make happy. This was a ſtanding viſible Teſtimony, to bring Man continually to Remembrance of his Sovereignty, that being thus far exalted above other Creatures, he might know himſelf to be under his Creator, and that he was infinitely above him; That he might remember his own Homage and Subjection to God, whenever he looked upon his Dominion over the Creatures. And truly in other natural Duties which an inward Principle and Inſtinct drives unto, the Suitableneſs and Conveniency, or Beauty of the Thing, doth often preponderate, and might make Man to obſerve them, without ſo much Regard of the Will and Pleaſure of the moſt High: But in this the Lord would have no other Reaſon of Obedience to appear, but his own abſolute Will and Pleaſure, to teach all Men to conſider in their Actings, rather the Will of the Commander, than the Goodneſs or Uſe of the Thing commanded. And then for this Reaſon, it was enjoined to make a more exact Trial, and to take a more ample Proof of *Adam*'s Obedience. Oftentimes we do Things commanded of God, but upon what Ground or Motive? Becauſe our own Intereſt lyes in them, becauſe

becauſe there is an inward Weight and *pondus* of Affection preſſing us to them. The Lord commands the mutual Duties between Parents and Children, between Man and Wife, between Friends, Duties of Self-preſervation and Defence, and ſuch like; and many are very exact and diligent in performing theſe: But from what Principle 'tis eaſy to diſcern, not becauſe they are commanded of God, (not ſo much as a Thought of that for the moſt part) but becauſe of an inward and natural Inclination of Affection towards our ſelves and our Relations, which is like an Inſtinct and Impulſe driving us to thoſe Duties. And truly we may ſay, 'tis the Goodneſs and Bounty of the Lord, that hath conjoined in moſt Parts of commanded Duties, our own Intereſt and Advantage, our own Inclination and Propenſion with his Authority, or elſe the Toil and Pain of them, would over-ballance the Weight of his Authority. Now then in ſuch Duties as are already imprinted on Man's Heart, and conſonant to his own Reaſon, there cannot be a clear Proof of Obedience of God's Will; the pure and naked Nature of Obedience doth not ſo clearly ſhine forth in the Obſervation of theſe, is it no great Trial of the Creatures Subjection of its Will to his ſupream Will, when there are ſo many Reaſons beſides his Will, which may incline Man's Will unto it: But here, in a Matter in it ſelf pleaſant to the Senſes, unto which he had a natural Inclination, the Lord interpoſes himſelf by a Command of Reſtraint, to take full Probation, whether Man would ſubmit to his good Pleaſure meerly for it ſelf, or whether he would obey meerly becauſe God commands: And indeed in ſuch like Duties as have no Commendation but from the Will and Authority of the Law-giver, it will appear, whether Man's Obedience be pure and ſimple Obedience, and whether Men love Obedience for it ſelf alone, or for other Reaſons: Therefore the Lord ſaith, Obedience is better than Sacrifice, and Diſobedience is Rebellion. Suppoſe in ſuch Things as can neither hurt us nor help us, God put a Reſtraint upon us, though Obedience may be of leſs Worth than in other more ſubſtantial Things, yet Diſobedience in ſuch eaſy Matters is moſt hainous, becauſe it proclaims open Rebellion againſt God: If it be light and eaſy, it is more eaſily obeyed, and the more Sin and Wickedneſs in diſobeying: And therefore is *Adam*'s Sin called Diſobedience in a ſignal Manner, *Rom.* v. becauſe by refuſing ſuch a ſmall Point of Homage and Subjection, he did caſt off God's Power and Authority over him, and would not acknowledge him for his Superior. This ſhould teach us who believe the repairing of that Image by Jeſus Chriſt, to ſtudy ſuch a Reſpect and Reverence to God's holy Will, as to do all Things without more asking, Why it is ſo? If we once know what it is, there is no more Queſtion to be asked. Of Creatures we muſt enquire a *quare*, after a *quid*; a *why*, after we know *what* their Will is: But Chriſtians ſhould have their Wills ſo ſubdued unto God's, that though no Profit nor Advantage were to redound by Obedience, though it were in Things repugnant and croſs to our Inclination and Humour, yet we ſhould ſerve and obey him, as a Teſtimony of our Homage and Subjection to him; and till we learn this, and be more abſtracted from our own Intereſts in the Ways of Obedience, even from the Intereſts of Peace, and Comfort, and Liberty, we do not obey him, becauſe he commands, but for our own Sakes. It is the Practice of *Antinomians*, and contrary to true Godlineſs,

lneſs, to look upon the Law of God as the Creatures Bondage, as moſt of us do in our walking; a Chriſtian in whom that Image of God is renewed according to Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, ſhould eſteem Subjection and Conformity to a Law, and to the Will of God his only true Liberty, yea the very Beauty of the Soul; and never is a Soul advanced in Conformity to God, till this be its Delight, not a Burden or Task.

Gal. iii. 12. *The Law is not of Faith; but the Man that doth them ſhall live in them.*

Gen ii. 17. *But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it; for in the Day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.*

THE Lord made all Things for himſelf, to ſhew forth the Glory of his Name, and Man in a more eminent and ſpecial Manner, for more eminent Manifeſtations of himſelf; therefore all his Dealings towards Men, whether righteous or ſinful, do declare the Glory of God. Particularly, in Reference to the preſent Purpoſe, he reſolved to manifeſt two ſhining Properties. His Sovereignty and Goodneſs; his Sovereignty is ſhewed, in giving out a Law and Command to the Creature, and his Goodneſs is manifeſted in making a Covenant with his Creature: As here you ſee the Terms of a Covenant, a Duty required, and a Promiſe made, and in caſe of failing, a Threating conformed to the Promiſe. He might have required Obedience ſimply, as the Lord and ſovereign Owner of the Being and Operations of the Creatures, and that was enough of Obligation to bind all Fleſh, that the Creator is Lawgiver, that he who gives a Being doth ſet Bounds and Limits to the Exerciſe and Uſe of that Being? But it pleaſed the Lord in his infinite Goodneſs and Love, to add a Promiſe and Threatning to that Law and Command, and ſo turns it to the Nature of a voluntary Covenant and Agreement; whereby he doth mitigate and ſweeten his Authority and Power, and condeſcends ſo low to Man, as to take on himſelf a greater Obligation than he puts upon Man, *Do this and thou ſhalt live.* He might then out of his Abſoluteneſs and Power, have required at the Creatures Hand any Terms he pleaſed, even the hardeſt could be imagined, and yet no Injuſtice in him; he might have put Laws on Men to reſtrain all their natural Liberty, and in every Thing, to proclaim nothing but his own Supremacy. But O! what Goodneſs and Condeſcenſion is even in the very Matter of the Law; and then in the Manner of preſcribing it with a Promiſe. In the Matter ſo juſt and equitable to convince all Men's Conſciences, yea, even engraven on their Hearts, that he lays not many Burdens on, but what Mens Conſciences muſt lay on themſelves, that there is nothing in it all when ſummed.

ſummed up harder than this, love God moſt of all, and thy Neighbour as they ſelf, which all Men muſt proclaim to be due, though it had not been required: And but one Precept added by his meer Will, which yet was ſo eaſy a Thing, as it was a Wonder the Lord of all put no other Conditions on the Creature: And then for the Manner that is propounded in Covenant-wiſe, with a Promiſe (not to expect the Creatures Conſent, for it did not depend on his Acceptation, he being bound to accept any Terms his Lord propounded) but becauſe the Matter and all was ſo equitable, and the Conditions ſo ample, that if it had been propounded to any rational Man, he would have conſented with an Admiration at God's Goodneſs. Indeed if we ſpeak ſtrictly, there cannot be a proper Covenant between God and Man, there is ſuch an infinite Diſtance between ſuch unequal Parties, our Obedience and Performance being abſolutely in his Power; we cannot promiſe it as our own, and it being but our Duty we cannot crave or expect a Reward in Juſtice, neither can he owe any Thing to the Creature; yet it pleaſed his Majeſty to propound it in theſe Terms, and to ſtoop ſo low unto Mens Capacities, and as it were come off the Throne of his Sovereignty, both to require ſuch Duties of Men, and to promiſe unto them ſuch a free Reward; and the Reaſons of this may be plain upon God's Part, and upon ours: In ſuch Dealing, he conſulted his own Glory, and Man's Good. His own Glory, I ſay, is manifeſted in it, and chiefly the Glory of his Goodneſs and Love, that the moſt High comes down ſo low, as to article with his own Foot-ſtool, that he changes his abſolute Right, into a moderate and temperate Government, and tempers his lordly and truly monarchial Power, by ſuch a Commixture of Gentleneſs and Goodneſs, in requiring nothing but what Man behooved to call reaſonable and due; and in promiſing ſo much, as no Creature could challenge any Title to it. When the Law was promulgate, *Do this*, eat not of this Tree; *Adam*'s Conſcience behooved to ſay, *Amen* Lord, all is due, all the Reaſon in the World for it: But when the Promiſe is added, and the Trumpet ſounds longer, thou ſhall live, O more than Reaſon, more than is due, muſt his Conſcience ſay. It was Reaſon, that the moſt high Lord ſhould uſe his Foot-ſtool as his Foot-ſtool, and ſet his Servant in the Place of a Servant, and ſo keep Diſtance from him. But how ſtrange is it, that he humbles himſelf to make Friendſhip with Man, to aſſume him in a Kind of Familiarity and Equality? And this Chriſt is not forgetful of; when he reſtores Men, he puts them in all their former Dignities, *I call you not Servants but Friends*: Next, his Wiſdom doth appear in this, that when he had made a reaſonable Creature, he takes a Way of Dealing, ſuitable to his Nature, to bring forth willing and free Obedience by the Perſwaſion of ſuch a Reward, and the Terror of ſuch a Puniſhment. He moſt wiſely did incloſe the Will of Man as it were on both Sides, with Hedges of Puniſhment and Reward, which might have been a ſufficient Defence or Guard againſt all the Irruptions of contrary Perſwaſions, that Man might continue in Obedience, and that when he went to the right Hand or left, he might be kept in, by the Hope of ſuch an ample Promiſe, and the Fear of ſuch a dreadful Threatning. But then the Righteouſneſs of God doth appear in this, for there is nothing doth more illuſtrate the Juſtice of the Judge, than when the Malefactor, hath

hath before consented to such a Punishment in case of Transgression; when the Law is confirmed by the Consent and Approbation of Man, now he has Man subscribing already to his Judgment, and so all the World must stop their Mouth and become guilty in case of Transgression of such a righteous Command after such Warning.

But in the next Place, 'tis no less for Man's Good: What a Honour and Dignity was put upon Man, when he was taken into Friendship with God? To be in Covenant of Friendship with a King, O what a Dignity is it accounted? And some do account it a great Privilege to be in Company and Converse with some eminent and great Person. But may not Man say with the Psalmist, *Lord what is Man that thou art so mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou visitest him,* Psal. viii. ? Again, what Way more fit and suitable to stir up and constrain *Adam* unto a willing and constant Obedience, when he had the Encouragement of such a gracious Reward, and the Determent of such a fearful Punishment? Between these two Banks might the Silver-streams of Obedience have run for ever without breaking over. He was bound to all, though nothing had been promised: But then to have such a Hope, what Spirits might it add to him? The Lord had been free upon Man's Obedience either to continue him his happy Estate, or, to denude him of it, or to annihilate him, there was no Obligation lying on him; but now, what Confirmation might Man have by looking upon the certain Recompence of Reward? When God brings himself freely under an Obligation of a Promise, and so ascertains it to his Soul, which he could never have dreamed of, and gives him Liberty to challenge him upon his Faithfulness to perform it. And then *Lastly*, There was no Way so fit to commend God, and sweeten him unto his Soul as this. *Adam* knew that his Goodness could not extend to God, that his Righteousness could not help him, nor his Wickedness hurt him, and so could expect nothing from his exact Obedience; but now when God's Goodness doth so overflow upon the Creature, and the Lord takes Pleasure to communicate Himself to make others happy, tho' he had need of none; O, how must it engage the Heart of Man to a delightful Remembrance, and Converse with that God? As his Authority should imprint Reverence, so his Goodness thus manifested should engrave Confidence. And thus the Life of Man was not only a Life of Obedience, but a Life of Pleasure and Delight; not only a holy, but a happy Life, yea, happy in Holiness.

Now as it was *Paul*'s great Business in preaching, to ride Marches between the Covenant of Grace, and the Covenant of Works, to take Men off that old broken Ship to this sure Plank of Grace that is offered by Jesus Christ to drowning Souls; So it would be our great Work to shew unto you the Nature of this Covenant, and the Terms thereof, that you may henceforth find and know that Salvation to be now impossible by the Law, which so many seek in it? We have no Errand to speak of the first *Adam*, but the better to lead you to the second: Our Life was once in the first, but he lost himself and us both, but the second by losing himself saves both. We have nothing to do to speak of the first Covenant, but that we may lead you, or pursue you rather to the second, established upon better Terms and better Promises.

The Terms of this Covenant are, *Do this, and live*; perfect Obedience without one Jot of Failling or Falling, an intire and universal Accomplishment of the whole Will of God, that is the Duty required of Man; there is no Latitude left in the Bargain, to admit Endeavours instead of Performance, or Desire instead of Duty; there is no Place for Repentance here; if a Man fail in one Point, he falls from the whole Promise; by the Tenour of this Bargain, there is no Hope of Recovery. If you would have the Duty in a Word, 'tis a Love of God with all our Heart and Soul, and our Neighbour as our self, and that testified and verified in all Duties and Offices of Obedience to God, and Love to Men, without the least Mixture of Sin and Infirmity. Now, the Promise on God's Part is indeed larger than that Duty, not only because undeserved, but even in the Matter of it, 'tis so abundant; Life, Eternal Life, Continuance in a happy Estate. There is a Threaning added, *In what Day thou eatest thou shalt die*; that is, thou shalt become a mortal and miserable Creature, subject to Misery here and hereafter; which is more pressingly set down in that Word, *Cursed is he that abides not in all Things written in the Law to do them.* It is very peremptory, that Men dream not of escaping Wrath, when they break but in one, suppose they did abide in all the rest. Cursed is every Man from the highest to the lowest, the Lord Almighty is engaged against him, his Countenance, his Power is against him to destroy him and make him miserable; whoever doth fail but in one Jot of the Commands, he shall not only fall from that blessed Condition freely promised, but lose all that he already possessed, fall from that Image of God, Dominion over the Creatures, and incur, instead of that possessed and expected Happiness, Misery here on Soul and Body, in Pains, Sicknesses, Troubles, Griefs, &c. And eternal Misery on both, without Measure hereafter. *Eternal Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power.*

Now, *This Law is not of Faith*, saith the Apostle: This opens up the Nature of the Bargain; and the Opposition between the present Covenant, and that which is made with lost Sinners with a Mediator. This Covenant is called, of Works, *Do this, and live*; to him that worketh is the Promise made, though freely too. It is Grace that once a Reward should be promised to Obedience, but having once resolved to give it, herein Justice appears in an equal and uniform Distribution of the Reward, according to Works; So that where there is an Equality of Works there shall be an Equality of Reward, and no Difference put between Persons equal: Which is the very Freedom of the Covenant of Grace that it passes over all such Considerations, and deals equally in Mercy with unequal Sinners, and unequally it may be with them that are equal in Nature.

You may ask, Was not *Adam* to believe in God, and did not the Law require Faith? I answer, Christ distinguishes a twofold Faith, *You believe in God, believe also in me.* No Question he was called to believe in God the Creator of the World; and that in a threefold Consideration.

First, To depend on God the Self-being and Fountain-good: His own Goodness was but a Flux and Emanation from that Sun of Righteousness, and so was to be perpetuated by constant abiding in his Sight; the Interposition of Man's self between him and God did soon bring on this eternal Night of Darkness. Nature

might have taught him to live in him in whom he had Life, and Being, and Motion, and to forget and look over his own Perfections as evanishing Shadows; But this quickly extinguished his Life when he began to live in himself.

Next, he was obliged to believe God's Word, both Threatning and Promise, and to have these constantly in his View; and certainly, if he had kept, in his serious Consideration, the inestimable Blessing of Life promised, and the fearful Curse of Death threatned, if he had not been induced first to doubt, and then to deny the Truth and Reality of these, he had not attempted such a desperate Rebellion against the Lord.

Then *Thirdly*, He was to believe and perswade himself of the Lord's fatherly Love, and that the Lord was well pleased with his Obedience, and this Faith would certainly beget much Peace and Quietness in his Mind, and also constrain him to love him, and live to him who loved him, and gave him Life and Happiness out of Love; yet this holds true that the Apostle saith, *the Law is not of Faith*, to wit, in a Mediator and Redeemer; it was a Bond of immediate Friendship, there needed none to mediate between God and Man, there needed no Reconciler where there was no odds nor Distance: But the Gospel is of Faith in a Mediator; it's the Soul plighting its Hope upon Jesus Christ in its desperate Necessity, and so supposes Man sinful and miserable in himself, and in his own Sense too, and so putting over his Weight and Burden upon one whom God hath made mighty to save: The Law is not of Faith, but of perfect Works, a Watch-word brought in of Purpose to bring Men off their hankering after a broken and desperate Covenant; it admits no Repentance, it speaks of no Pardon, it declares no Cautioner or Redeemer; there is nothing to be expected, according to the Tenor of that Covenant, but Wrath from Heaven; either personal Obedience in all, or Personal Punishment for ever, that is the very Terms of it, and it knows no other Thing. Either bring compleat Righteousness and Holiness to the Promise of Life, or expect nothing but Death.

This may be a sad Meditation to us, to stand and look back to our former Estate, and compare it with that into which we are fallen; that Image we spoke of is defaced and blotted out, which was the Glory of the Creation, and now there is nothing so monstrous, so deformed in the World as Man; the Corruption of the best Things is always worst, the Ruins of the most noble Creature are most ruinous, the Spot of the Soul most abominable; we are nothing but a Mass of Darkness, Ignorance, Error, inordinate Lust; nothing but Confusion, Disorder, and Distempers in the Soul, and in the Conversation of Men; and in Sum, that blessed Bond of Friendship with God broken, Discord and Enmity entered upon our Side and separated us from God, and so we can expect nothing from that first Covenant, but the Curse and Wrath threatned: By one Man's Disobedience Sin entered upon all, and Death by Sin; because in that Agreement *Adam* was a common Person representing us, and thus are all Men once subject to God's Judgment, and come short of the Glory of God, fallen from Life into a State of Death, and, for any Thing could be expected, irrevocably. But it hath pleased the Lord in his infinite Mercy, to make a better Covenant in Christ his Son, that, what was impossible to the Law, by Reason of our Weakness and Wickedness, his Son, sent

in the Flesh, condemned for Sin, might accomplish, *Rom.* viii. 3. There is some Comfort yet after this; That Covenant was not last, and that Sentence was not irrevocable; He makes a new Transaction, lays the Iniquity of his Elect upon Christ, and puts the Curse upon his Shoulders which was due to them; Justice cannot admit the Abrogation of the Law, but Mercy pleads for a Temperament of it; and thus the Lord dispenses with personal Satisfaction, which in Rigour he might have craved; and finds out a Ransom, admits another's Satisfaction in their Name: And in the Name of that Cautioner and Redeemer is Salvation preached upon better Terms, *Believe and thou shalt be saved*, Rom. x. Thou lost and undone Sinner, whoever thou art, that findest thy selfguilty before God, and that thou canst not stand in Judgment by the former Covenant; thou who hast no personal Righteousness, and trusts in none, come here, embrace the Righteousness of thy Cautioner, receive him, and rest on him, and thou shalt be saved.

Eccl. vii. 29. *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made Man upright; but they have sought out many Inventions.*

THE one half of true Religion consists in the Knowledge of our selves, the other half in the Knowledge of God; and whatever besides this, Men study to know and apply their Hearts unto, it's vain and impertinent, and like meddling in other Mens Matters, neglecting our own, if we do not give our Minds to the Search of these. All of us must needs grant this in the general, that it is an idle and unprofitable Wandring abroad, to be carried forth to the Knowledge and Use of other Things, and in the mean Time to be Strangers to our selves, with whom we should be most acquainted. If any Man was diligent and earnest in the Enquiry and Use of the Things in the World, *Solomon* was; he applied his Heart to seek out Wisdom, and what Satisfaction was in the Knowledge of all Things natural, and in this he attained a great Degree beyond all other Men; yet he pronounces of it all, after Experience and Trial, that *this also was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*, not only empty and unprofitable, and not conducing to that true Blessedness he sought after; but, hurtful and destructive, nothing but Grief and Sorrow in it. After he had proved all, with a Resolution to be wise, yet it was far from him, *I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me*, Ver. 23. And therefore, after long wandring abroad, he returns at length home to himself, to know the Estate of Mankind, *Lo, this only have I found*, &c. Ver. 29. When I have searched all other Things, and found many Things by Search, yet (says he) What doth it all concern me, when I am ignorant of my self? There is one Thing concerns me more than all, to know the Original of Man, what he once was made, and to know how far he is departed from his Original. This only I have found profitable to Men, and as the Entry and Preparation to that Blessedness I enquire

enquire for, to have the true Diſcovery of our Miſery.

There are two Things then concerning Man that you have to ſearch and to know, and that not in a trifling or curious Manner, as if you had no other End in it but to know it, as Men do in other Things, but in a ſerious and earneſt Way, as in a Matter of ſo much Concernment to our eternal Well-being. In Things that relate particularly to our ſelves, we labour to know them for ſome Advantage, beſides the knowing of them, even though they be but ſmall and lower Things; how much more ſhould we propoſe this unto our ſelves in the Search and Examination of our own Eſtate, not meerly to know ſuch a Thing, but to know it that we may be ſtirred up and provoked in the Senſe of it to look after the Remedy that God holds forth. There are two Things that you have to know; What Man once was made, and how he is now unmade; how happy once, and how miſerable now. And anſwerable to theſe two, are Branches of the Text, *God made Man upright*, that he was once; *and they have ſought out many Inventions*, not being contented with that Bleſſedneſs they were created into, by catching at a higher Eſtate of Wiſdom, have fallen down into a Gulf of Miſery, as the Man that gazed on the Stars above him, and did not take Notice of the Pit under his Feet till he fell into it; and thus Man is now. So you have a ſhort Account of the two Eſtates of Men, of the Eſtate of Grace and Righteouſneſs without Sin, and the Eſtate of Sin and Miſery without Grace: You have the true Story of Man from the Creation unto his preſent Condition: But all the Matter is, to have the lively Senſe of this upon our Hearts. I had rather that we went home bewailing our Loſs, and lamenting our Miſery, and longing for the Recovery of that Bleſſedneſs, than that we went out with the exact Memory of all that is ſpoken, and could repeat it again.

God made Man upright: At his firſt moulding the Lord ſhewed excellent Art, and Wiſdom, and Goodneſs too; Man did come forth from under his Hand in the firſt Edition very glorious, to ſhew what he could do; *upright*, that is, all right and very exactly conformed to the noble and high Pattern, endued with Divine Wiſdom ſuch as might direct him to true Happineſs, and furniſhed with a Divine Willingneſs to follow that Direction; the Command was not above his Head as a Rod, but within his Heart as a natural Inſtinct; all that was within him was comely and and beautiful; For that glorious Light that ſhined upon him, having Life and Love with it, produced a ſweet Harmony in the Soul; he knew his Duty, and loved it, and was able to perform it. O! How much is in this one Word, *Upright*? Not only Sincerity and Integrity in the Soul, but Perfection of all the Degrees and Parts; no Part of Holineſs wanting, and no Meaſure of theſe Parts; no Mixture of Darkneſs or Ignorance, no Mixture of Indiſpoſition or Unwillingneſs; Godlineſs was ſweet and not laborious; the Love of God, poſſeſſing the Heart, did conform all within and without to the Will of God, and O how beautiful was that Conformity! And that Love of God, the Fountain-being, did ſend forth as a Stream, Love and Good will to all Things, as they did partake of God's Image; and ſo Holineſs towards God did beget Righteouſneſs towards Men, and made Men to partake of one anothers Happineſs.

This is a Survey of him in his Integrity as God made him, but there follows a ſad

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but, a sad and woful Exception: *But, they have sought many Inventions.* We cannot look upon that glorious Estate whereunto Man was made, but straightway we must turn our Eyes upon that Misery into which he hath plunged himself, and be the more affected with it, that it was once otherwise. It is Misery in a high Degree to have been once happy; this most of all aggreges our Misery, and may encrease the Sense of it, that such Man once was, and such we might have been, if we had not destroyed our selves. Who can look upon these Ruins, and refrain Mourning? It's said, that those who saw the Glory of the first Temple, wept when they beheld the second, because it was not answerable to it in Magnificence and Glory: So, I say, it might occasion much Sadness and Grief, even to the Children of God, in whom that Image is in part repaired, and that by a second Creation, to think how much more happy and blessed Man once was, who had Grace and Holiness without Sin. But certainly, it should and must be at first, before this Image be restored, the bitter Lamentation of a Soul, to look upon it self wholly ruinous and defaced, in the view of that glorious stately Fabrick which once was made: How lamentable a Sight is it to behold the first Temple demolished, or the first Creation defaced, and the second not yet begun in many Souls, the Foundation-stone not yet laid. It was a sad and doleful Invention which Satan inspired at first into Man's Heart, to go about to find out another Happiness, to seek how to be wise as God, an Invention that did proceed from Hell, how to know Evil experimentally and practically by doing it; that Invention hath invented and found out all the Sin and Misery under which the World groans. It is a poor Invention to devise Misery and Torment to the Creature; this was the Height of Folly and Madness, for a happy Creature to invent how to make it self miserable and all others. Indeed, he intended another Thing, to be more happy; but Pride and Ambition got a deserved Fall, the Result of all is Sin and Misery.

And now from the first devilish Invention, the Heart of Man is possessed with a Multitude of vain Imaginations. Man is now become vain in his Imaginations, and his foolish Heart is darkned; that Divine Wisdom he was endued withal is eclipsed, for it was a Ray of God's Countenance, and now he is left wholly in the dark without a Guide, without a Director or Leader; he is turned out of the Path of Holiness, and so of Happiness; a Night of gross Darkness and Blindness is come on, and the Way is full of Pits and Snares, and the End of it is at best eternal Misery; and there is no Lamp, no Light to shine in it, to shew him either the Misery that he is posting unto, or the Happiness that he is fleeing from: There is nothing within him sufficient to direct his Way to Blessedness, and nothing willing nor able to follow such a Direction. And thus Man is left to the Invention and Counsel of his own desperately wicked and deceitful Heart; and that is above all Plagues to be given up to a reprobate Mind. He is now left to such a Tutor and Guider, and it is full of Inventions indeed. But they are all in vain, that is, all of them insufficient for this great Purpose; all of them cannot make one Hair that is black, white, much less redeem the Soul; but besides, they are destructive; they pretend to deliver, but they destroy; a desperate wicked Heart imagineth evil continually, evil against God, and evil to our own Souls; and a deceitful Heart smooths over the Evil,

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and presents it under another Notion, and so, under Pretence of a Friend, 'tis the greatest Enemy a Man hath, a Bosom Enemy. All Mens Inventions, Thoughts, Cogitations, Projects and Endeavours, what do they tend to, but to the Satisfaction of their Lusts; either the Lusts of the Mind, as Ambition, Pride, Avarice, Passion, Revenge, and such like; or the Lust of the Body, as Pleasure to the Ears and Eyes, and to the Flesh. Man was made with an upright Soul, with a Dominion over that brutish Part, more like Angels; but now, all his Invention runs upon that base and beastly Part, how to adorn it, how to beautify it, how to satisfy it, and for this his Soul must be a Drudge and Slave: And if Men rise up to any Thoughts of a higher Life, yet what is it for, but to magnify and exalt the Flesh, to seek an Excellency within, which is lost, and so to satisfy the Pride and Self-love of the Heart. If any Man comes this Length, as to apprehend some Misery, yet how vain are his Inventions about the Remedy of it; not knowing how desperate the Disease is, Men seek help in themselves, and think by Industry, and Care, and Art, to raise them up in some Measure, and please God by some Expiations or Sacrifices of their own Works. Now, this tends to no other Purpose, but to satisfy the Lusts of Man's Pride, and so it increases that which was Man's first Malady, and keeps them from the true Physician. In a Word, all Man's Inventions are to hasten Misery on him, or to blindfold himself till it come on; all his Invention cannot reach a Delivery from this Misery. Let us therefore consider this which *Solomon* hath found out, and if we carefully consider it, and accurately ponder it in Relation to our own Souls, then have we also found it with him. Consider, I say, what Man once was, and what you are now, and bewail your Misery and the Fountain of it, our Departure from the Fountain of Life and Blessedness. Know what you are, not only weak, but wicked, whose Art and Power lies only in Wickedness; skilful and able only to make your selves miserable; and let this Consideration make you cast away all your Confidence in your selves, and carry you forth to a Redeemer, who hath found a Ransom, who hath found out an excellent Invention to cure all our Distempers and desperate Diseases. The Counsel of the Holy Trinity that met about (if I may so speak) our Creation in Holiness and Righteousness after his own Image; that same hath consulted about the rest of it, and hath found out this Course, that one of them shall be made after Man's Image, and for this Purpose, that he may restore again God's Image unto us. O bless this deep Invention and happy Contrivance of Heaven, that could never have bred in any Breast, but in the Depths of eternal Wisdom; and let us abandon and forsake our own vain Imaginations, and foolish Inventions; let us become Fools in our own Eyes, that we may become wise. Man by seeking to be wise, became a Fool, that was an unhappy Invention; now 'tis turned contrary, let all Men take with their Folly and desperate Wickedness; let not the vain Thoughts and Dreams of our own Well-being and Sufficiency lodge within us, and we shall be made wise, come to the Father's Wisdom, unto Jesus Christ, who is that blessed Invention of Heaven for our Remedy. *How long shall vain Thoughts lodge within you?* O when will you be washed from them, how long shall not your Thoughts transcend this temporal and bodily Life? How long do you imagine to live in Sin and die in the

the Lord, to continue in Sin and eſcape Wrath? Why do ye delude your Souls with a Dream of having Intereſt in the Love of God, and purchaſing his Favour by your Works? Theſe are ſome of thoſe many Inventions Man hath ſought out.

Rom v. 12. *Wherefore as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin: And ſo Death paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.*

THIS is a ſad Subject to ſpeak upon, yet it is not more ſad than uſeful: Though it be unpleaſant to hold out a Glaſs to Men, to ſee their own vile Faces into, yet is it profitable, yea, and ſo neceſſary, that till once a Soul apprehend its broken and deſolate Condition in the firſt *Adam*, it can never heartily imbrace and come to the ſecond *Adam*. You have here the woful and dreadful Effects and Conſequents of the firſt Tranſgreſſion upon all Mankind; the Effect is twofold, Sin and Miſery, or Sin and Death; the Subject is univerſal in both, *all Men*, the whole World. Behold what a Flood of Calamity hath entred at a ſmall Cranny. By one Man's Tranſgreſſion? May it not be ſaid of Sin in general, which the wiſe Man ſpeaks of Strife; the Beginning of Sin is as when one lets out Water, therefore it had been good leaving it off before it had been meddled with, it entred at a ſmall Hole, but it hath overflowed a whole World ſince.

That which firſt occurrs, is, That all Mankind proceeding from *Adam* by ordinary Birth are involved in Sin by *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion. But that may ſeem a hard ſaying, that Sin and Death ſhould flow unto the whole Poſterity who had no Acceſſion to *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion: It would ſeem, that every Man ſhould die for his own Iniquity, and that it ſhould reach no further in Juſtice. But conſider, I pray you, the Relation that *Adam* ſtood into, and in which he is here holden out as a Figure of Chriſt. *Adam* the firſt Man was a common Perſon repreſenting all Mankind, in whoſe Happineſs or Miſery all ſhould ſhare; God contracts with him on theſe Terms, that his Poſterity's Eſtate ſhould depend on his Behaviour. Now if all Mankind would have reaped the Benefit and Advantage of *Adam*'s Perſeverance, if ſuch an undeſerved Reward of eternal Life would have redounded by the free Promiſe unto them all, what Iniquity is it that they alſo be Sharers in his Miſery? Our Stock and Treaſure was ventured in this Veſſel, and if we were to partake of its Gain, why not of its Loſs? You ſee among Men, Children have one common Lot with their Parents; if the Father be forfeited, the Heirs ſuffer in it, and are caſt out of the Inheritance: It might appear a ſurer Way to have the Fortunes of all (ſo to ſpeak) depend upon one, and their Happineſs aſſured unto them upon the ſtanding of one, than to have every one left unto himſelf, and his own Well-being depending upon his own ſtanding; as it is more likely one, and that the firſt one, ſhall not ſin, than many, and eſpecially when

when that one knew that the Weight of all his Posterity hung upon him, it might have made him very circumspect, knowing of how great Moment his Carriage was. But certainly we must look a little higher than such Reasons, there was a glorious Purpose of God's predominant in this, else there was no natural Necessity of imputing *Adam*'s Sin to the Children not yet born, or propagating it to the Children. He that brought a holy One and undefiled out of a Virgin who was defiled, could have brought all others clean out of unclean Parents: But there is a higher Counsel about it, the Lord would have all Men subject to his Judgment, all Men once guilty, once in an equal State of Misery, to illustrate that special Grace shewed in Christ the more, and demonstrate his Power and Wrath upon others. That which concerns us most, is to believe this, that Sin hath overspread all; and to have the lively Impressions of this, were of more Moment to true Religion, than many Discourses upon it. I had rather you went Home not cursing *Adam*, or murmuring against the most High, but bemoaning your selves for your wretched Estate, than be able to give Reasons for the general Imputation and Propagation of Sin. You all see it is, and therefore you should rather mourn for it, than ask why it is.

There is Sin entered in the World by Imputation, and also by Propagation. *Adam*'s first Sin and heinous Transgression is charged upon all his Posterity, and imputed unto them, even unto them *who have not sinned according to the Similitude of* Adam's *Transgression*, that is actually as he did. Infants whom you call Innocents (and indeed so they are in respect of you who are come to Age) yet they are guilty before God of that Sin that ruined all. Now that ye may know what you are, and what little Reason you have to be pleased with your selves, and absolve your selves as ye do, I shall unbowel that Iniquity unto you. *First*, There was in it an open Banner displayed against God: When the sovereign Lord had enjoined his Creature such a Testimony of his Homage and Loyalty, and that so easy to be performed, and such as not a whit could abate from his Happiness, what open Rebellion was it to refuse it? It was a casting off the sovereign Dominion of God, than which nothing can be more heinous, as if the Clay should refuse to serve the Potter's Pleasure, and therefore 'tis eminently and signally stiled Disobedience, as having nothing in it but the pure naked Nature of Disobedience; no Difficulty to excuse it, for it was most easy; no Pleasure to plead for it, for there were as good Fruit beside, and a World of them; no Necessity to extenuate it; so that you can see nothing in it, but the ugly Face of Disobedience and Rebellion, *ver.* 19. Whereby Man draweth himself from his Allegiance due to his Maker, and shaketh off the Yoke in reproach of the most High. *Next*, You may behold the vile and abominable Face of Ingratitude and Unthankfulness in it; and truly Heathens have so abhorred Unthankfulness towards Men, that they could not digest the Reproach of it. *Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris*: If you call me unthankful, you may call me any Thing, or all Things; 'tis a Compend of all Vices; 'tis even Iniquity grown to Maturity and Ripeness: But that such a Fruit should grow out of such a holy and good Soil, so well dressed and manured by the Lord, was a Wonder. *Lord what was Man that thou so magnified him, and made him a little lower than the Angels?* That thou put all Things sub-

lunary under his Feet, and exalted him above them! For that Creature, choſen and ſelected from among all, to be his Minion, to ſtand in his Preſence, adorned and beautified with ſuch Gifts and Graces, magnified with ſuch glorious Privileges, made according to the moſt excellent Pattern, *His own Image*, to forget all, and forget ſo ſoon; and when he had ſuch a ſpacious Garden to make uſe of (as is ſuppoſed to make up the third Part of the Earth) to eat of no Fruit but that which was forbidden, there is no ſuch monſtrous Ingratitude can be imagined as here was acted. But then conſider the two Fountains from which this flowed, Unbelief and Pride, and you ſhall find it the heavieſt Sin in the World; Unbelief of his Word and Threatning; firſt he was brought to queſtion it, and doubt of it, and then to deny it. A Word ſo ſolemnly and particularly told him by the Truth it ſelf, that ever a Queſtion of it could ariſe in his Mind or get Entry, what elſe was it than to impute Iniquity to the Holy One? And that Iniquity or Falſhood and Lying, which his Nature moſt abhors? What was it to blaſpheme the moſt high and faithful God, by hearkning to the Suggeſtions of his Enemy, and credit them more than the Threatnings of God? To give the very flat Contradiction to God, *we ſhall not die*; and to aſſent ſo heartily to Satan's Slanders and Reproaches of God. And this Unbelief opened a Door to Ambition and Pride, the moſt ſacrilegious Ingredient of all, which is moſt oppoſite to God, and unto which he moſt oppoſed himſelf from the Beginning, *You ſhall be like Gods*; was he not happy enough already, and according to God's Image? Nay, but this evil Principle would ariſe up to the Throne of God, and ſit down in his ſtead. Pride hath Atheiſm in it, to deny the true God, and yet would be a God it ſelf; For the Foot-ſtool to lift up it ſelf thus, what an Indignity was it? And indeed this wretched Aim at ſo high an Eſtate, hath thrown us down as low as Hell. You ſee then how injurious this Tranſgreſſion was to God. There was Diſobedience and Rebellion in it, which denies his Dominion and Supremacy, there was Unthankfulneſs in it, denying his Goodneſs and Bounty, there was Unbelief in it, contradicting his Truth and Faithfulneſs, and finally, Pride oppoſing it ſelf to all that is in God, reaching up to his very Crown of Majeſty to take it off. You ſee then what you are guilty of, in being guilty of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion; many of you flatter your ſelves in your own Eyes, that you have not done much Evil, and you will juſtifie your ſelves in your Compariſons with others: But I beſeech you conſider this, though you had never done perſonally Good or Evil, here that which drowned the World in Miſery is your Sin, and charged upon you; you are guilty of that which ruined all Mankind, and makes the Creation ſubject to Vanity and Corruption. O if ye believed this, you would find more need of the ſecond *Adam* than you do. O how precious would this Righteouſneſs and Obedience be to you, if you had rightly apprehended your Intereſt in the firſt Man's Diſobedience.

But beſides this Imputation, there is much more propagated unto all, and that is a total Corruption and Depravation of Nature in Soul and Body, whereby Man is utterly indiſpoſed, diſabled, and made oppoſite unto all that is truly and ſpiritually Good, and wholly inclined to all Evil, and that continually, which is commonly called Original Sin; a total Averſeneſs from God, and from all Goodneſs, an Antipathy againſt theſe Ways of Holineſs, and

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a Propenſion and ſtrong Impulſe towards Evil, even as a Stone moves downwards. This Poiſon and Contagion of Sin entering into the World, hath infected all, and gone through all the Members; neither is it any wonder it be ſo, when this Leproſy hath defiled the Walls and Roof of the Houſe, I mean, hath made the Creation ſubject to Vanity and Corruption; it is no wonder that it ſpread Abroad in his Iſſue, and makes all unclean like himſelf. And truly this is it which moſt abaſes Man's Nature, and being ſeen, would moſt humble Men; yea, till this be diſcerned, no Man can be indeed humbled, he will never apprehend himſelf ſo bad as he is, but ſtill imagine ſome Excellency in himſelf, till he ſee himſelf in this Glaſs. You talk of good Natures, and good Diſpoſitions, *but in our Fleſh* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *dwells no good Thing*, the Seeds of all Wickedneſs are in every one of us, and 'tis the Goodneſs of God for preſerving of human Society, that they are reſtrained and kept down in any from the groſſeſt Out-breakings. They know not themſelves, who know any Good of themſelves, and they know not themſelves, who either are in Admiration at, or in Bitterneſs or Contempt againſt other Sinners, whoſe Sins are manifeſt to all. This were the only way to profit by looking on their Evils, if we could ſtraight-way retire within and behold the Root of that in our ſelves, the Fountain of it within us, and ſo grow in Loathing not of theſe Perſons, but of human Nature, and in ſuitable Thoughts of our ſelves and others, and might wonder at the Goodneſs and undeſerved Bounty of the Lord, that paſſes an Act of Reſtraint upon our Corruption, and damms it up. Oh! that we could learn to loath our ſelves in other Mens Evils! Thus we might reap good out of the evil; and prevent more in our ſelves. But the looking upon groſs Provocations as Singularities, makes them more general, becauſe every Man does not charge himſelf with the Corruption that is in all theſe, but prefers himſelf to another; therefore are Reins looſed to Corruption, and a Sluice opened, that it may come out, that he who would not ſee his own Image in anothers Face, may behold it in the Glaſs of his own Abominations. There is no Point leſs believed than this, though generally confeſſed, that Man is dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes, and impotent to help himſelf. You will hardly take with Wickedneſs when you confeſs Weakneſs, as if Nature were only ſick, but not dead, hurt but not killed; therefore it is that ſo many do abide in themſelves, and truſting to their own good Purpoſes and Reſolutions, and Endeavours, do think to pacify God and help themſelves out of their Miſery. But, O look again, and look in upon your ſelves in the Glaſs of the Word, and there is no doubt, but you will ſtraightway be filled with Confuſion of Face, and be altogether ſpoiled of good Confidence and Hope, as you call it: You will find your ſelf plunged in a Pit of Miſery, and all Strength gone, and none on the right Hand or the left to help you; and then, and not till then, will the ſecond *Adam*'s Hand ſtretched out for help be ſeaſonable.

That which next follows is, that which is the Companion of Sin inſeparably, *Death hath paſt upon all*, and that by Sin. *Adam*'s once Diſobedience opened a Port for all Sin to enter upon Mankind, and Sin cannot enter without this Companion Death. Sin goes before, and Death follows on the back of it, and theſe ſuit one another, as the Work and the Wages, as the Tree and the Fruit, they have a

Fitneſs one to another: Sowing to Corruption reaps an anſwerable Harveſt, to wit, Corruption. Sowing to the Wind, and reaping the Whirl-wind, how ſuitable are they? That Men may know how evil and bitter a Thing Sin is, he makes this the Fruit of it in his firſt Law and Sanction given out to Men, he joins them inſeparably, Sin and Death, Sin and Wrath, Sin and a Curſe.

By Death is not only meant bodily Death, which is the Separation of the Soul from the Body, but firſt the ſpiritual Death of the Soul, conſiſting in a Separation of the Soul from God's bleſſed enlightening, enlivening and comforting Countenance. Man's true Life, wherein he differs from Beaſts, conſiſts in the right Aſpect of God upon his Soul, in his walking with God, and keeping Communion with him; all Things beſides this, are but common and baſe, and this was cut off; his Comfort, his Joy and Peace in God extinct, God became terrible to his Conſcience, and therefore Man did flie and was afraid, when he heard his Voice in the Garden. Sin being interpoſed between God and the Soul, cut off all the Influence of Heaven. Hence ariſes Darkneſs of Mind, Hardneſs of Heart, Deluſions, vile Affections, Horrors of Conſcience. Look what Difference is between a living Creature and a dead Carcaſe, ſo much is between *Adam*'s Soul upright, living in God, and *Adam*'s Soul ſeparated from God by Sin. Then upon the outward Man the Curſe redounds, the Body becomes mortal which had been incorruptible, 'tis now like a beſieged City; now ſome outter Forts are gained by Diſeaſes, now by Pains and Torments, the outward Walls of the Body are at length overcome; and when Life hath fled into a Caſtle within the City, the Heart, that is at laſt of all beſieged ſo ſtraitly, and ſtormed ſo violently, that it muſt render unto Death upon any Terms, the Body of Man is even a Seminary of a World of Diſeaſes and Grievances, that if Men could look upon it aright, they might ſee the Sentence of Death every Day performed. Then how many Evils in Eſtate, in Friends and Relations, in Imployments, which being conſidered by Heathens, hath made them praiſe the dead more than the living, but him not yet born moſt of all, becauſe the preſent Life is nothing elſe but a Valley of Miſery and Tears, a Sea of Troubles, where one Wave continually prevents another, and comes on like *Job*'s Meſſengers; before one ſpeaks out his woful Tidings, another comes with ſuch like, or worſe. But that which is the Sum and Accompliſhment of God's Curſe and Man's Miſery, is that Death to come, eternal Death, not Death ſimply, but *an everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power*: An infinite Loſs, becauſe the Loſs of ſuch a glorious Life in the Enjoyment of God's Preſence; and an infinite Hurt and Torment beſide, and both Eternal. Now this is what we would lay before you; you are under ſuch an heavy Sentence from the Womb, a Sentence of the Almighty, adjudging you for *Adam*'s Guilt, and your own, to all the Miſery in this World, and the next; to all the Treaſures of Wrath that are heaped up againſt the Day of Wrath; and ſtrange it is, how we can live in Peace and not be troubled in Mind, who have ſo great and formidable a Party. Be perſwaded, O be perſwaded, that there ſhall not one Jot of this be removed, it muſt be fulfilled in you or your Cautioner. And why then is a Saviour offered, a City of Refuge opened, and ſecure Sinners will not flie into it? But as for as many as have the

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inward dreadful Apprehenſion of this Wrath to come, and know not what to do, know, that to you is Jeſus Chriſt preached, the ſecond *Adam* a quickning Spirit, and in that Conſideration better than the firſt, not only a living Soul himſelf, but a Spirit to quicken you who are dead in Sins, one who hath undertaken for you and will hold you faſt: *Adam* who ſhould have kept us, loſt himſelf. Chriſt in a manner loſt himſelf to ſave us: And as by *Adam*'s Diſobedience all this Sin and Miſery hath abounded on Man, know, that the ſecond *Adam* his Obedience and Righteouſneſs is of greater Vertue and Efficacy to ſave, and in ſtead of Sin to reſtore Righteouſneſs, and in ſtead of Death to give Life: Therefore you may come to him, and you ſhall be more ſurely kept than before.

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1 Tim. i. 15. *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners.*

OF all Doctrines that ever were publiſhed to Men, this contained here, is the choiſeſt, as you ſee the very Preface prefixed to it imports; And truly, as it is the moſt excellent in it ſelf, it could not but be ſweet unto us, if we had received into the Heart the Belief of our own Wretchedneſs and Miſery. I do not know a more ſovereign Cordial for a fainting Soul, than this faithful Saying, *That Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners.* And therefore we are moſt willing to dwell on this Subject, and to inculcate it often upon you, that without him you are undone and loſt, and in Him you may be ſaved. I profeſs, all other Subjects, (howſoever they might be more pleaſing to ſome Hearers) are unpleaſant and unſavoury to me. This is that we ſhould once learn, and ever be learning to know him that came to ſave us, and come to him.

We laboured to ſhew unto you the State of Sin and Miſery that *Adam*'s firſt Tranſgreſſion hath ſubjected all Mankind unto, which if it were really and truly apprehended, I do not think, but it would make this Saying welcome to your Souls. Man being plunged into ſuch a deep Pit of Miſery, Sin and Death having overflowed the whole World, and this being ſeen and acknowledged by a Sinner, certainly the next Queſtion in order of Nature is this, hath God left all to periſh in this Eſtate? Is there any Remedy provided for Sin and Miſery? And this will be indeed the Query of a ſelf-condemned Sinner. Now there is a Plank after this broken Ship, there is an Anſwer ſweet and ſatisfactory to this Queſtion: *Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners.*

We ſhall not expatiate into many Notions about this, or multiply many Branches of this. The Matter is plain and ſimple, and we deſire to hold it out plainly and ſimply, that this is the Remedy of Sin and Miſery. When none could be found on the right Hand or left Hand, here a Saviour from Heaven comes down from above, whence no Good could be expected, becauſe a good God was provo-

provoked. Can any Good come out of *Nazareth*, that was a Proverb concerning him. But I think in some Sense it might be said, can any Good come down from Heaven, from his holy Habitation to this accursed Earth? Could any Thing be expected from Heaven, but Wrath and Vengeance? And if no Good could be expected that Way, what Way could it come? Sure if not from Heaven, then from no Art; Yet from Heaven our Help is come, from whence it could not be looked for, even from him who was offended, and his Justice engaged against Man, that he might both satisfy Justice and save Man, that he might not wrong himself nor destroy Man utterly, he sends his only begotten Son, equal with himself in Majesty and Glory into the World in the State of a Servant, to accomplish Man's Salvation, and perform to him Satisfaction. Therefore Christ came into the World to save Sinners.

There were two grand Impediments in the Way of Man's Salvation, which made it impossible to Man; one is God's Justice, another is Man's Sin: These two behooved to be satisfied or removed, e're there can be Access to save a Sinner. The Sentence of Divine Justice is pronounced against all Mankind. *Death past on all.* A Sentence of Death and Condemnation: Now, when the Righteousness and Faithfulness of God is engaged into this, how strong a Party do you think that must be? What Power can break that Prison of a Divine Curse, and take out a Sinner from under Justice Hand? Certainly, there is no coming out till the uttermost Farthing be paid that was owing, till compleat Satisfaction be given to all Wrongs. Now, truly, the Redemption of the Soul had ceased for ever (it's so precious that no Creature can give any Thing in Exchange for it) except Jesus Christ had come into the World, one that might be able to tread that Wine-press of Wrath alone, and give his Life a Ransom, in Value far above the Soul, and pay the Debt of Sin that we were owing to God. And, indeed, he was furnished for this Purpose, a Person suited and fitted for such a Work. A Man to undertake it in our Name, and God to perform it in his own Strength. A Man, that he might be made under the Law, and be humbled even to the Death of the Cross, that so he might obey the Commandment, and suffer the Punishment due to us, and all this was elevated beyond the worth of created Actions, or sufferings by that Divine Nature. This perfumed all his Humanity, and all done by it, or in it; this put the Stamp of Divinity upon all, and imposed an infinite Value upon the Coin of finite Obedience and Sufferings; And so in his own Person, by coming into the World, and acting and suffering in the place of Sinners, he hath taken the first great Impediment out of the Way; taken down the high Wall of Divine Justice which had enclosed round about the Sinner, and satisfied all its Demands by paying the Price; so that there is nothing upon God's Part to accuse or condemn, to hinder or obstruct Salvation.

But then there is an inner Wall, or dark Dungeon of Sin, into which the Sinner is shut up, and reserved in Chains of his own Lusts, until the Time of everlasting Darkness, and when Heaven is opened by Christ's Death, yet this keeps a Sinner from entring in. Therefore Jesus Christ, who came himself into the World to satisfie Justice, and remove its Plea, that there might be no Obstruction from that Airth, he sends out his powerful Spirit

Spirit with the Word, to deliver poor captive Sinners, to break down the Wall of Ignorance and Blindneſs, to caſt down the high Tower of Wickedneſs and Enmity againſt God, to take captive and chain our Luſts, that kept us in Bondage; And, as he made Heaven acceſſible by his own perſonal Obedience and Sufferings, ſo he makes Sinners ready and free to enter into that Salvation by his Spirit's working in their Perſons. In the one, he had God, as it were, his Party, and him he hath ſatisfied ſo far, that there was a Voice came from Heaven to teſtifie it, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed,* and therefore, in Teſtimony of it, God raiſed him from the Dead. In the other, he hath Satan and Man's wicked Nature as his Party, and theſe he muſt conquer and ſubdue; theſe he muſt overcome, ere we can be ſaved; a ſtrange Buſineſs indeed, and a great Work, to bring ſuch two oppoſite and diſtant Parties together, a holy and juſt God, and a ſinful and rebellious Creature, and to take them both as Parties, that he might reconcile both.

Now, What do you think of this, my Beloved, That ſuch a glorious Perſon is come down from Heaven, for ſuch a Work as the Salvation of Sinners? I put no Doubt, it would be moſt acceptable unto you, if you knew your Miſery, and knowing your Miſery you could not but accept it, if you believed that it were true and faithful. I find one of theſe two the great Obſtruction in the Way of Souls receiving Advantage by ſuch glad Tidings; either the abſolute Neceſſity and Excellency of the Goſpel is not conſidered, or the Truth and Reality of it is not believed, Men either do not behold the Beauty of Goodneſs in it, or do not ſee the Light of Truth in it; either there is nothing diſcovered to engage their Affections, or nothing ſeen to perſwade their Underſtandings. Therefore the Apoſtle ſounds a Trumpet, as it were, in the Entry, before the Publication of theſe glad News, and commends this unto all Men as a true and faithful Saying, and as worthy of all Acceptation. There is here the higheſt Truth and Certainty to ſatisfy the Mind, *it's a faithful Saying*; and there is here alſo the chiefeſt Good to ſatiate the Heart, *it's worthy of all Acceptation.* Now, if you do really apprehend your loſt and miſerable Eſtate, you cannot but behold that raviſhing Goodneſs in it; and behold that you cannot, till you ſee the other firſt: Whence is it, I pray you, that ſo many Souls are never ſtirred with the Propoſition of ſuch Things in the Goſpel, that the Riches and Beauty of Salvation in Jeſus Chriſt doth not once move them? Is it not becauſe there is no lively Apprehenſion of their Miſery without him?

SER-

THE SINNERS SANCTUARY:

OR,

A Discovery made of those glorious Privileges offered unto the penitent and faithful under the Gospel.

The PREFACE.

COURTEOUS READER,

IT *floweth more from that Observance (not to say Honour) which is due to the Laws of* Custom, *than from any other Motive, that the* Stationers *hold it expedient to salute thee at thy Entry into this Book, by any commendatory Epistle; having sufficient Experience, that Books are oft inquired after, and rated according to the Respect Men generally have of the Author, rather than from the Matter contained therein, especially if the Book be divine or serious; upon which Ground this* Treatise *might have come abroad, meerly upon the Vertue of the* Title Page. *Mr.* Hugh Binning *being so well known, and his other* Treatise *so universally (as deserving) received by the Intelligent, and studious in the great Mysteries of the* Trinity, *and other dark Principles of the* Christian Faith.

Yet if Worthiness of Matter (as the curious carved Stones of the Temple *were to the* Disciples) *be amiable to thine Eyes, and nervous Sentences, solid Observations, with a Kind of insinuating, yet harmless Behaviour, be taking with thy Spirit, here they are also; and acquainting thyself with them, either as the* Sinner, *or the* Saint (*which thine own Conscience shall best inform thee of*) *there shall be Vertue found to proceed from them, either for thy Soul's refining from the Dross of this corrupt* Age, *or to a diligent heed-taking to preserve thyself pure from* the Pollutions which are in the World through Lust, to be more and more pure against the Day and Coming of Christ our Saviour.

Tho' many elaborate Pieces *are already extant, and* Treatises *of many* Worthies *of the* Church, *be already abroad upon this* golden Chapter, *yet he who hath seen the manyest, and knows the* Sublimity *and* Darkness, *withal the* Excellency *of the* Subjects *therein treated, shall know this* Work, *or* Lamp, *to have its* Weight *and* Light; *and tho' small, yet as a* Candle, shall increase, and add to those Lights already burning *upon the Table of his* Memory *or* Museol: There is but one Spirit, one Faith, one Baptism; *yet about, and in these,* there are Diversities of Gifts;

and

and tho' all Men naturally have but one Face, yet the Variety to be seen in each one, procureth both Wonder *and* Delight, *there being in every one something new, something which makes it differ from all other. There is here to be found something* enlarged, enlightned, *and* applied, *which in other* Volumes *may not be heeded, or but slenderly touched; or if it were otherwise, here it is in some other* Way, Method, *or* Expreſſion: *Beſides which,* there is no new Thing under the Sun. *And have we not, nay, chuſe we not to have Variety of* Gemms, Agats, Rubies *and* Diamonds *ſhining about us, ſome ſquared, ſome angled, each having their own Excellency, becauſe ſo formed? If this Inſtance take not, it is becauſe* the Children of this Generation are wiſer than the Children of Light.

That the Work is imperfect, is for a Lamentation, ſave for this, that while the Author was contemplating upon the Spirit of Adoption, *and being with God, the Spirit called upon him by Death, as the Voice did upon the Divine, ſaying,* Come up hither, and I will ſhew thee, *Rev.* iv. 1. *So that what* David *ſaid of* the Waters of *Bethlehem, may be ſaid of this* lame Orphan, Is not this the Blood of this good Man? *The great and wiſe Maſter-builder of the Church, giving this young Man Order to lay the* Foundation, *and raiſe the* Building *but this high, appointing, it may be, ſome other to perfect and lay on the* Roof; *yea, poſſibly it is ſquared and framed already for thy Uſe in other* Treatiſes, *and thyſelf to perfect the* Edifice *of thy Salvation, by joining this and that together in thy Practice. Mr.* Hugh Binning *ſhewing thee in his Lot, how to be rid of, or delivered from the Law's Condemnation,* Ver. 1. *and ſome other in his Quarter to demonſtrate becauſe of that,* neither height, nor deep, ſhall be able to ſeparate thee from the Love of God, *Ver. laſt of this* Chap.

Had this Work *come directly from the* Author's *own Hands, he had ſpoken in his own Stile his own Mind; but that being denied, receive this* poſthume Infant, *as* David *did* Mephiboſheth; *firſt for its Father's Sake, next for its own: Tho' it be lame in the Feet, yet it is of goodly Countenance, and ſpeaketh ſo well, that its Language hath got an* Imprimatur; *and where it is ſilent, reſt ſatisfied with that old refreſhing Cordial in ſuch Caſes,*

Cætera Deſiderantur.

SER-

SERMON I.

Romans VIII. 1. *There is therefore now no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.*

THERE are three Things which concur to make Man miserable; Sin, Condemnation, and Affliction: Every one may observe, *that Man is born unto Trouble, as the Sparks flie upward*; that his Days here are few and evil, *he possesses Months of Vanity, and wearisome Nights are appointed for him*, Job v. 6, 7. and vii. 3. *He is of few Days, and full of Trouble*, Job xiv. 1. Heathens have had many Meditations of the Misery of Man's Life; and in this have out-stript the most Part of Christians. We recount, amongst our Miseries, only some Afflictions and Troubles; as Poverty, Sickness, Reproach, Banishment, and such like: They again have numbred even these natural Necessities of Men amongst his Miseries, to be continually turned about, in such a Circle of Eating, Drinking, and Sleeping: What Burden should it be to an immortal Spirit to roll about perpetually that Wheel? We make more of the Body than of the Soul: They have accounted this Body a Burden to the Soul; they placed Prosperity, Honour, Pleasure, and such Things, which Men pour out their Souls upon, amongst the greatest Miseries of Men, as Vanity in themselves, and Vexation, both in the injoying and losing of them: But, alas! they knew not the Fountain of all this Misery, *Sin*; and the Accomplishment of this Misery, *Condemnation*. They thought Trouble came out of the Ground and Dust, either by a natural Necessity, or by Chance; but, the Word of God discovereth unto us the Ground of it, and the End of it: The Ground and Beginning of it was Man's Defection from God, and walking according to the Flesh; and from this Head have all the Calamities and Streams of Miseries in the World issued; it hath not only redounded to Men, but even to the whole Creation, and subjected it to Vanity, *Ver.* 20. of this *Chap.*: Not only shalt thou, O Man (saith the Lord to *Adam*) eat thy Meat in Sorrow, but thy Curse is upon the Ground also, and thou who was immortal, shalt return to that Dust which thou magnified above thy Soul, *Gen.* iii. 17. But the End of it is suitable to the Beginning; the Beginning had all the Evil of Sin in it, and the End hath all the Evil of Punishment in it. These Streams of this Life's Misery, they run into an infinite, boundless, and bottomless Ocean of

eternal Wrath. If thou live according the Flesh, thou shalt die: It is not only Death here, but eternal Death after this. The Miseries then of this present Life, are not a proportionable Punishment of Sin; they are but an Earnest given of that great Sum, which is to be payed in the Day of Accounts; and that is *Condemnation, everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord and the Glory of his Power.* Now as the Law discovers the perfect Misery of Mankind, so the Gospel hath brought to Light a perfect Remedy of all this Misery. Jesus Christ was manifested to take away Sin, and therefore his Name is *Jesus, for he shall save his People from their Sins. This is the Lamb of God that takes away the Sins of the World. Judgment was by one unto Condemnation of all,* but now *there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; so these two Evils are removed, which indeed have all Evil in them. He takes away the Curse of the Law, being made under it; and then he takes away the Sin against the Law by his Holy Spirit. He hath a twofold Vertue, for he came by *Blood* and *Water*, 1 *John* v. 6. 7. by *Blood*, to cleanse away the Guilt of Sin; and by *Water*, to purifie us from Sin it self. But in the mean Time, there are many Afflictions and Miseries upon us, common to Men: Why are not these removed by Christ? I say, the Evil of them is taken away, tho' themselves remain. Death is not taken away, but the Sting of Death is removed. Death, Afflictions, and all are overcome by Jesus Christ, and so made his Servants to do us good: The Evil of them is God's Wrath and Sin, and these are removed by Jesus Christ. Now they would be taken away indeed, if it were not good they remained, for *all Things work together for the Good of those that love God*, Ver. 28. So then we have a most compleat Deliverance in extent, but not in degrees: Sin remains in us, but not in Dominion and Power: Wrath sometimes kindles because of Sin, but it cannot increase to everlasting Burnings. Afflictions and Miseries may change their Name, and be called Instructions and Trials, Good and not Evil: But Christ hath reserved the full and perfect Delivery till another Day, which is therefore called *the Day of compleat Redemption*, and then all Sin, all Wrath, all Misery shall have an End, and *be swallowed up of Life and Immortality*, Ver. 23.

This is the Sum of the Gospel; and this is the Substance of this Chapter. There is a threefold Consolation answerable to our three-fold Evils: *There is no Condemnation to those that are in Christ.* Here is a blessed Message to condemned lost Sinners, who have that Sentence within their Breasts, *Ver.* 1. This was the End of Christ's coming and dying, that he might deliver us from Sin as well as Death, and the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us; and therefore he hath given the Holy Spirit, and dwels in us by the Spirit, to quicken us who are *dead in Sins and Trespasses.* O! what Consolation will this be to Souls, that look upon the Body of Death within them, as the greatest Misery, and do groan with *Paul, O miserable Man that I am*, &c. Rom. vii. 24. This is held forth to *Ver.* 17. But because there are many Grounds of Heaviness and Sadness in this World, therefore the Gospel opposes unto all these, both our Expectation which we have of that blessed Hope to come, whereof we are so sure, that nothing can frustrate us of it, and also the Help we get in the mean Time,

Time of the Spirit to bear our Infirmities, and to bring all Things about for Good to us, *Ver.* 28. And from all this the Believer in Jesus Christ, hath Ground of Triumph and Boasting before the perfect Victory. Even as *Paul* doth in the Name of Believers, from *Ver.* 31. to the End. Upon these Considerations, he that cryed out not long ago, *O miserable Man, who shall deliver me?* doth now cry out, *Who shall condemn me?* The distressed Wrestler becomes a victorious Triumpher: The beaten Soldier becomes more than a Conqueror. Oh, that your Hearts could be perswaded to hearken to this joyful Sound! to embrace Jesus Christ for Grace and Salvation; how quickly would a Song of Triumph in him swallow up all your present Complaints and Lamentations?

All the Complaints amongst Men, may be reduced to one of these three. I hear the most Part bemoaning themselves thus; Alas for the Miseries of this Life, this evil World! Alas for Poverty, for Contempt, for Sickness! Oh miserable Man that I am, who will take this Disease away? Who will shew me *any good Thing*? Psal. iv. any temporal Good? But if ye knew and considered your latter End, ye would cry out more; ye would refuse to be comforted, though these Miseries were removed. But I hear some bemoaning themselves more sadly, they have heard the Law and the Sentence of Condemnation is within them; the Law hath entred and killed them: Oh! *What shall I do to be saved? Who will deliver me from the Wrath to come?* What is all present Afflictions and Miseries, in respect of Eternity? Yet there is one Moan and Lamentation beyond all these, when the Soul finds the Sentence of Absolution in Jesus Christ, and gets its Eyes opened to see that Body of Death and Sin within, that perfect Man of Sin diffused throughout all the Members; then it bemoans it self with *Paul, Oh miserable Man, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death?* Rom. vii. 24. I am delivered from the Condemnation of the Law, but what Comfort is it, as long as Sin is so powerful in me? Nay, this makes me often suspect my Delivery from Wrath and the Curse, seeing Sin it self is not taken away.

Now, if you could be perswaded to hearken to Jesus Christ, and embrace this Gospel, O! what abundant Consolation should ye have? What a perfect Answer to all your Complaints? They would be swallowed up in such a Triumph, as *Paul*'s is here. This would discover unto you a perfect Remedy of Sin and Misery, that ye should complain no more; or at least no more as these without Hope. You shall never have a Remedy of your temporal Miseries, unless ye begin at eternal, to prevent them. *Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all other Things shall be added unto you:* Seek first to flee from the Wrath to come, and ye shall escape it; and beside, the evil of Time-afflictions shall be removed: First, remove the greatest Complaints of Sin and Condemnation, and how easie is it to answer all the Lamentations of this Life, and make you rejoice in the midst of them.

You have in this Verse three Things of great Importance to consider, the great and gracious Privilege, the true Nature, and the special Property of a Christian. The Privilege is one of the greatest in the World, because 'tis of eternal Consequence and Soul-concernment; The

Nature is moſt Divine, he is one that is in Jeſus Chriſt, and implanted in him by Faith: His diſtinguiſhing Property is noble, ſuitable to his Nature and Privileges; he walks not as the World, according to his baſe Fleſh, but according to the Spirit. All theſe three are of one Latitude, none of them reaches further than another; that rich Privilege and ſweet Property concenters and meets together in one Man, even in the Man who is in Jeſus Chriſt; whoever enters into Jeſus Chriſt, and abideth in him, he meets with theſe two, Juſtification and Sanctification; theſe are no where elſe, and they are there together.

If ye knew the Nature and Properties of a Chriſtian, ye would fall in Love with theſe for themſelves, but if theſe for your own ſakes will not allure you, conſider this incomparable Privilege that he hath beyond all others, that ye may fall in Love with the Nature of a Chriſtian. Let this Love of your ſelves, and your own Well-being purſue you in to Jeſus Chriſt, that ye may walk even as he walked: And I aſſure you, if ye were once in Chriſt Jeſus, ye would love the very Nature and Walking of a Chriſtian, no more for the Abſolution and Salvation that accompanies it, but for its own Sweetneſs and Excellency beyond all other. Ye would, as the People of *Samaria*, no more believe for the Report of your own Neceſſity and Miſery, but ye would believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and walk according to the Spirit, for *their* own Teſtimony they have in your Conſciences. Ye would no more be allured only with the Privileges of it to embrace Chriſtianity, but ye would think Chriſtianity the greateſt Privilege, a Reward unto it ſelf. *Pietas ipſa ſibi merces eſt*; Godlineſs is great Gain in it ſelf, though it had not ſuch ſweet Conſequents or Companions. That you may know this Privilege, conſider the Eſtate all Men are into by Nature: *Paul* expreſſes it in ſhort, Rom. v. *By the Offence of one Judgment came upon all unto Condemnation*, and the Reaſon of this is, *by one Man Sin came upon all, and ſo Death by Sin, for Death paſſed upon all, becauſe all have ſinned*, Ver. 18. 12. Lo then, all Men are under a Sentence of Condemnation once: This Sentence is the Curſe of the Law: *Curſed is every one that abideth not in all Things commanded to do them.* If ye knew what this Curſe were, ye would indeed think it a Privilege to be delivered from it. Sin is of an infinite Deſerving, becauſe againſt an infinite God: 'Tis an Offence of an infinite Majeſty, and therefore the Curſe upon the Sinner involves eternal Puniſhment. O! what Weight is in that Word, 2 *Theſ.* i. 9. *Ye ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power?* If it were duely apprehended, it would weigh down a Man's Soul, and make it heavy unto Death. This Condemnation includes both *damnum & pœnam poenam damni & poenam ſenſus*, and both are infinite in themſelves, and eternal in their Continuance. What an unpleaſant and bitter Life would one lead, that were born to a Kingdom, and yet to be baniſhed it, and loſe it? But what an incomparable Loſs is it, to fall from an heavenly Kingdom, which Heart cannot conceive, and that for ever? *In God's Favour is Life, and in his Preſence are Rivers of Pleaſures for evermore.* When your petty Penny-loſſes do ſo much afflict your Spirits, what would the due Apprehenſion of ſo great a Loſs do? Would it not be Death unto you, and worſe than Death, to be ſeparated from this Life, to be eternally baniſhed from the Preſence of his Glory?

If

If there ſhould be no more puniſhment but this only; if the wicked were to endure for ever on Earth, and the godly whom they deſpiſed and mocked, were tranſlated to Heaven, what Torment would it be to your Souls to think upon that Bleſſedneſs which they enjoy above? And how fooliſhly ye have been put by it for a Thing of no Value? What would a rich Man's Advantages and Gains be to him, when he conſidereth what an infinite Loſer he is? How he hath ſold a Kingdom for a Dung-hill? Now if there were any Hope, that after ſome Years his Baniſhment from Heaven might end, this might refreſh him, but there is not one Drop of ſuch Conſolation: He is baniſhed, and eternally baniſhed from that glorious Life in the Preſence of God, which theſe do enjoy, whom he deſpiſed. If a Man were ſhut up all his Life-time in a Pit, never to ſee the Light once more, would not this be Torment enough to him? But when withall there is ſuch Pain joyned with this Loſs; when all this Time, he is tormented within with a gnawing Worm, and without with Fire: Theſe Senſes that did ſo greedily hunt after Satisfaction to themſelves, are now as ſenſible in the feeling of Pain and Torment; and when this ſhall not make an End, but be eternal; O! whoſe Heart can conſider it? It is the Comfort and Eaſe of bodily Torments here, that they will end in Death. Deſtruction deſtroys it ſelf, in deſtroying the Body, but here is an immortal Soul to feed upon, and at length the Body ſhall be immortal, that Deſtruction cannot quite deſtroy it, but ſhall be an everlaſting Deſtruction, and living Death.

This is the Sentence that is once paſt againſt us all in the Word of God, and not one Jot of this Word ſhall fall to the Ground: Heaven and Earth may fail ſooner. Ye would think it were an irrepealable Decree, if all the Nations in the Earth, and Angels above conveened to adjudge a Man to Death, did paſs Sentence upon him: Nay, but this Word that is daily ſpoken to you, which paſſeth this Sentence upon you all, is more certain; and this Sentence of Death muſt be executed, unleſs ye be under that bleſſed Exception made here, and elſe where in the Goſpel. I beſeech you conſider what it is to have ſuch a Judge condemning you. Would not any of you be afraid, if ye were under the Sentence of a King? If that Judgment were above your Head, who of you would ſit in Peace and Quietneſs? Who would not flee from the Wrath of a King, that is like the Roaring of a Lion? But there is a Sentence of the KING of Kings and Nations above your Heads: *Who would not fear thee*, to whom it doth appertain, *O King of Nations!* It is not a great Man that can deſtroy thy Body that is againſt thee; it is not he who hath Power to kill thee, and he hath alſo a great Deſire ſo to do; this were indeed much: But it is the great and eternal JEHOVAH, *who lifts up his Hand to Heaven, and ſwears he lives for ever*, he is againſt thee: He who hath all Power over Body and Soul, is againſt thee, and ſo is obliged to improve his Omnipotency againſt thee: *He can kill both Soul and Body, and caſt them into Hell*, and by vertue of this Curſe he will not ſpare thee, but pour out all the Curſes in this Book. Thou would be at no Peace if thou wert declared Rebel by the King and Parliament; but alas! that's a ſmall Thing; they can but reach thy Body, nay, neither can they always do that; thou may flee from them, but whither canſt thou flee from him? Thou cannot go out of his Dominions, for the

Earth

Earth is his, and the Sea, and all that therein is: Darkneſs cannot hide thee from him; he may ſpare long, becauſe he can certainly overtake when he pleaſes: Men may not, becauſe they have no Aſſurance of finding. I beſeech you then, conſider this, it is of Soul-conſequence; and *what hath a Man gained, if he gain the World, and loſe his Soul?* If the Gainer be loſt, what is gained? And it is of eternal Conſequence, and what is many thouſand Years to this? You can look beyond all theſe, and might comfort your ſelves in Hope; but you cannot ſee to the End of this, there is ſtill more before than is paſt; nay, there is nothing paſt, it is ſtill as Beginning.

O that ye would conſider this Curſe of God that ſtands regiſtrate upon us all; What Effects had it on Chriſt, when he did bear it? It made his Soul heavy to Death, it was a Cup that he could ſcarcely drink; he that ſupported the Frame of this World, was almoſt near ſuccumbing under the Weight of this Wrath; it made him ſweat Blood in the Garden: He that could do all Things, and ſpeak all Things, was put to this, *What ſhall I ſay?* When this Condemnation was ſo terrible to him, who was that mighty One upon whom all Help was laid, what ſhall it be to you? No Man's Sorrow was ever like his, nor Pain ever like his, if all the ſcattered Torments were united in one; but becauſe he was God he overcame, and came out from under it. But what do you think ſhall be the Eſtate of theſe who ſhall endure that ſame Torment? and not for three Days, or three Years, or ſome thouſands of Years, but beyond Imagination, to all Eternity.

I beſeech you coſider this Condemnation which ye are adjudged unto, and do not ly under it. Do ye think ye can endure what Chriſt endured? Do ye think ye can bear Wrath according to God's Power and Juſtice? And yet the Judgment is come upon all Men to this Condemnation. But, alas! who fears him according to his Wrath? Who knows the Power of his Anger? Ye ſleep ſecure, as if all Matters were paſt and over your Head. We declare unto you in the Lord's Name, that this Condemnation is yet above you, becauſe you have not judged your ſelves: It is preached unto you that ye may flee from it, but ſince ye will not condemn your ſelves, this righteous Judge muſt condemn you.

Now, ſince it is ſo, that ſuch a condemnatory Sentence is paſt on all Men, what a Privilege muſt it be, to be delivered from it, to have that Sentence repealed by ſome new Act of God's Mercy and Favour? *David* proclaims him a *bleſſed Man, whoſe Sins are forgiven and covered*; and indeed he is bleſſed who eſcapes that Pit of eternal Miſery, though there were no more; though there were no Title to an Inheritance and Kingdom above, to be delivered from that Wrath to come upon the Children of Diſobedience, this is more Happineſs than the Enjoyment of all earthly Delights: *What would a Man give in Exchange for his Soul? Skin for Skin, and all a Man hath he will give for his Life:* Theſe Riches and Advantages and Pleaſures that Men ſpend their labour for, all theſe they will part with in ſuch a hazard. The covetous Man he will caſt his Coffers over-board ere he loſe his Life: The voluptuous Man he will ſuffer Pain and Torment in cutting off a Member, ere he die. But if Men knew their Souls, and what an Immortality and Eternity expects them, they would not only give Skin for Skin, and all that they have for their Soul, but their

their Life alſo: Ye would chooſe to die a thouſand Deaths to eſcape this eternal Death. But *what ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul,* Mat. xvi. 26. though he would give, yet what hath he to give? There are two Things endears any Privilege to us, and heightens the Rate of it; the Neceſſity of it, and the Precioufneſs of it: And theſe two are eminent here. Is it not neceſſary to be, to live, and have a Being? All Men think ſo, when they will give all they have to redeem themſelves: All other Things are accidental to them, they are neareſt to themſelves; therefore all muſt go ere themſelves go. But I ſay this is more neceſſary, to be well eternally, than to be ſimply; to eſcape this Condemnation, than to have a Being. And this ſhall be verified in the laſt Day, when Men ſhall cry for *Hills and Mountains to fall on them, and ſave them from the Wrath of the Lamb,* Rev. vi. 16. Men will chooſe rather not to be, than to fall in that Wrath. O how acceptable would a Man's firſt nothing be to him in that great Day of Wrath? Who ſhall be able to ſtand in it? when Kings and Princes, bond and free, great and ſmall, ſhall deſire Mountains to grind them into Powder, rather than to hear that Sentence of Condemnation, and yet ſhall not obtain it. *O bleſſed are all they that truſt in him, when his Wrath is kindled but a little,* Pſal. ii. 12. Ye toil and vex your ſelves, and ſpend your Time about that Body and Life, but for as precious as they are to you now, ye would exchange them one Day for Immunity and Freedom from this Wrath and Curſe. How will that Man think *his Lines are fallen in pleaſant Places*? How will he deſpiſe the Glory of earthly Kingdoms, though all united in one? who conſiders in his Heart how all Kings, all Tongues and Nations muſt ſtand before the Judgment-ſeat of God, and the Books of his Law be opened, to judge them by, as alſo the Books of their Conſciences, to verifie his Accuſation, and precipitate their own Sentence; and then in the open View of all the Sons of *Adam*, and the Angels, all Secrets be brought out, their Accuſation read as large as their Lifetime, and as many Curſes to be pronounced againſt every one, as there be Breaches of the Law of God, whereof they are found guilty; and then all theſe will ſeek into Corners, and cry for Mountains, but there is no Covering from his Preſence. What do ye think the Man will think within himſelf who will ſtand before God, and be abſolved in Judgment by Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding his Provocations above many of them? What will a King then think of his Crown and Dominions, when he reflects on them? What will the poor perſecuted Chriſtian then think of all the Glory and Perfection of this World, when he looks back upon it? O know, poor fooliſh Men, what Madneſs is in venturing your Souls for Trifles, ye run the hazard of all greateſt Things for a poor Moment's Satisfaction. Ye will repent it too late, and become wiſe to judge your ſelves Fools, when there is no Place to mend it.

But this Privilege is no more neceſſary than it is precious: Your Souls are now kept captive under that Sentence of everlaſting Impriſonment, ye are all Priſoners, and know not of it. What will ye give in Ranſom for your Souls? Your Sins and Iniquities have ſold you to the righteous Judge of all the Earth, as Malefactors, and he hath paſt a Sentence of your perpetual Impriſonment under Satan's Cuſtody in Hell. Now what will you

give

give to redeem your Souls from that Pit? How few know the Worth of their Souls? And ſo they offer unto God ſome of their Riches for them. Doth not many of you think ye have ſatisfied for Sins, if ye pay a civil Penalty to the Judge; many think their own Tears and Sorrow for Sin may be a Price to Juſtice, at leaſt if it be joined with Amendment in Time coming. And ſo Men conceive their Sins are pardoned, and their Souls redeemed. But alas! *the Redemption of the Soul is precious*, yea, *it ceaſeth for ever*; all your Subſtance will be utterly contemned, though ye offered it. How few of you would give ſo much for your Souls? And yet though ye give it, it will not do it, ye muſt pay the uttermoſt Farthing, or nothing. Your Sorrow and Reformations will not compleat the Sum, no nor begin it, *though thou waſh thee with Nitre, and take much Sope, yet is thine Iniquity marked with me*, yet there is ſtill Condemnation for thee: Though all the World ſhould conveen about this Matter, to find a Ranſom for Man; ſuppoſe all the Treaſures of Monarchs, the Mines and Bowels of the Earth, the Coffers of rich Men were ſearched; nay that the Earth, the Sea, the Heavens, and Sun and Moon be prized at the higheſt: Join all the Merits of Angels above, and Men below, all their good Actions and Sufferings, yet the Sum that amounts of all that Addition, would not pay the leaſt Farthing of this Debt. The Earth would ſay, it is not in me, the Heaven behoved to anſwer ſo, Angels and Men might ſay, we have heard of it, but 'tis hid from all living. Where then is this Redemption from the Curſe? Where ſhall a Ranſom be found? Indeed God hath found it: It is with him, he hath given his Son a Ranſon for many, and his Blood is more precious than Souls, it let be Gold and Silver. Is not this then a great Privilege, that if all the Kingdoms of the World were ſold at the deareſt, yet they could not buy it? What a Jewel is this? What a Pearl? Who ever of you have eſcaped this Wrath, conſider what is your Advantage, O conſider your Dignity ye are advanced unto, that ye may engage your Hearts to him, to become his, and his wholly: For *you are bought with a Price*; and are no more your own, he gave himſelf for you, and was made a Curſe to redeem you from the Curſe. O how ſhould ye walk as privileged Men, as redeemed ones.

I beſeech you all to call home your Thoughts, to conſider and ponder on this Sentence that is paſt againſt us; there is now Hope of Delivery from it, if ye will take it home unto you; but if ye will ſtill continue in the Ways of Sin, without returning, know this that ye are but multiplying thoſe Curſes, platting many Cords of your Iniquities, to bind you in everlaſting Chains; ye are but digging a Pit for your Souls, ye that ſweat in your Sins, and travel in them, and will not embrace this Ranſom offered: The Key and Lock of that Pit is eternal Deſpair. O conſider how quickly your Pleaſures and Gains will end, and ſpare ſome of your Thoughts from preſent Things, to give them to Eternity, that Threed ſpun out for ever and ever; the very length of the Days of the Ancient of Days, who hath no beginning of Days, nor end of Time. Remember now of it, leaſt ye become as long miſerable as God is bleſſed, and that is for ever.

All Men would deſire to have Privileges beyond others, but there is one that carries it away from all the World, and that is the Believer in Jeſus Chriſt;

who

who is said to be in Christ, implanted in him by Faith, as a lively Member of that Body whereof Christ is the Head; Christ Jesus is the Head of that Body, the Church; and this Head communicates Life unto all the Members, for *he fills all in all*; there is a mighty working Power in the Head, which diffuseth it self throughout the Members, *Eph.* i. 19, 22, 23. There are many Expressions of Union between Christ and Believers, there is no near Conjunction among Men, but this spiritual Union of Christ with Believers is represented to us under it: The Foundation and the Building have a near Dependance, the Corner-stone and the Wall these knit together; and *Christ Jesus is the Foundation and the chief Corner-stone, in whom all the Building fitly joyned together, groweth up into an holy Temple*, Eph. ii. 20, 21. The Head and Members are near united, so is Christ and Believers, they *grow up into him*, Eph. iv. 15. Parents and Children are almost one, so is Christ Jesus the everlasting Father, and he shews to the Father the Children which he hath given him: We are his Brethren, and he is not ashamed to call us so. But which is more, we are one Flesh with him: There is a Marriage between Christ and the Church, and this is the great Meditation of the Song of *Solomon*. *He is the Vine-tree, and we are Branches* planted in him. Nay this Union is so strict, that it is mutual, *I in them and they in me*. Christ dwelleth in us by Faith, by making us to believe in him, and love him; we dwell in Christ by that same Faith and Love, by believing in him, and loving him. Christ Jesus is our House where we get all our Furniture; he is our Store-house and Treasure, our Place of Strength and Pleasure, a City of Refuge, a strong Tower, and a pleasant River to refresh us. We again are his Habitation where he dwelleth by his Spirit, we are his Work-house, where he works all his curious Pieces of the new Creature, forming it unto the Day of Espousals, the great Day of Redemption.

This gives us to understand what we once were; we may stand here and look back upon our former Condition, and find Matter both of Delight and Sorrow. We were once *without Christ* in the World, and if without Christ, then *without God and Hope in the World*, Eph. ii. 12. I wish this were engraven on the Hearts of Men, that they are born out of Christ Jesus; wild Olives, growing up in the Stock of degenerated *Adam*: He was once planted a noble Vine, but how quickly turned he into a degenerate Plant, and instead of Grapes, brought forth wild Grapes, and sowre. We all grow upon an *Olive-tree that is wild by Nature*, Rom. xi. 24. It grows out of the Garden of God, in the barren Wilderness, and is meet for nothing but to bring forth Fruit unto Death, to be cut down and cast into the Fire. 'Tis a Tree which the Lord hath cursed, *never more Fruit grow upon thee henceforth*: This was the fatal Sentence pronounced on *Adam*. O that you would know your Condition by Nature! how all your good Inclinations, Dispositions, and Educations, cannot make your Stock good, and your Fruit good. *Ephraim is an empty Vine*, this is our Name: Nay, but many think they bring forth Fruit. Hath not Heathens spread forth their Branches, and brought forth many pleasant Fruits of temporal Patience, Sobriety, Magnanimity, Prudence, and such like? Doth not some civil Men many Acts of Civility profitable to Men? Do not many a Man pray, and read the

Scriptures from his Youth up? Yes indeed, these are Fruits, but for all that he is an empty Vine, for *he brings forth Fruit to himself*; and so, as in the Original, he is a Vine emptying the Fruit which it gives, *Hos.* x. 1. All these Fruits are but to himself, and from himself; he knows not to direct those to God's Glory, but to his own Praise or Advantage, to make them his Ornament: And he knows not his own Emptiness, to seek all his Furniture and Sap from another. What were all these fair Blossoms and Fruits of Heathens? Indeed they were more and better than any now upon the Multitude of professed Christians: And yet these were but *splendida peccata*, shinning Sins. What is all your praying and fasting? but *to your selves*, as the Lord charges the People, *Zech.* vii. *Do you fast at all to me*? No, *ye do it to your selves*. Here is the Wildness and Degrateness of your Natures, either you bring forth very bitter Fruits, such as Intemperance, Avarice, Contention, Swearing, &c. or else Fruits that have nothing but a fair Skin, like Apples of *Sodom*, that are beautiful on the Tree, but being handled turn to Ashes; so there is nothing of them from God, or to God. I think every Man almost entertains this secret Perswasion in his Breast, that his Nature it may be weak, yet it is not wicked; it may be helped with Education, and Care and Diligence, and dressed till it please God, and profit others. Who is perswaded in Heart that he is an Enemy to God, and cannot be subject to God's Law? Who believes that their *Heart is desperately wicked*? Oh! 'tis indeed *deceitful above all Things*, and in this most deceitful, that it perswades you ye have a good Heart to God. Will not profane Men, whose Hands are defiled, maintain the Uprightness of their Hearts? *Nemo nascitur bonus sed fit*. I beseech you once consider that ye are born out of Christ Jesus; ye conceive ye are born and educated Christians, ye have that Name indeed from Infancy, and are baptized. But I ask about the Thing, Baptism of Water doth not implant you into Jesus Christ; nay, it declares this much unto you, that by Nature ye are far off from Jesus and wholly defiled, all your Imaginations only Evil. Now I beseech you, how came the Change? or is there a Change? Are not the most Part of Men the old Men? No new Creatures; *he that is in Christ is a new Creature*, 2 Cor. v. 16. Ye have now *Adam*'s Nature, which ye had first: Ye have born the Image of the earthly, and are ye not such yet, who are still earthly? Think ye that ye can inherit the Kingdom of God thus? Can ye pass over from a State of Condemnation, to a Sate of Life and no Condemnation, without a Change? No, believe it, ye cannot inherit Incorruption with Flesh and Blood which ye were born with: Ye must be implanted in the second *Adam*, and bear his Image, ere ya can say that ye are Partakers of his Blessings, 1 *Cor.* xv, 47, 48, 49, &c. Now I may pose your Consciences, how many of you are changed? Are not the most Part of you even such as ye were from your Childhood? Be not deceived, ye are yet Strangers from the Promises of God, and without this Hope in the World.

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SERMON II.

Verse 1. *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ, who walk,* &c.

ALL the Promises are yea, and Amen, in Christ Jesus, they meet all in him, and from him are derived unto us. When Man was in Integrity, he was with God, and in God, and that immediately, without the Intervention of a Mediator; but our falling from God, hath made us without God: and the Distance is so great, as *Abraham* speaks to the rich Man, that *neither can these above go down to him, nor he come up to them:* There is a Gulf of Separation between God and us, that there can be no Meeting. And so we who are *without God,* are *without Hope in the World,* Eph. ii. 12. no Hope of any more Access to God as before. The Tree of Life is compast about with a flaming Fire and a Sword; God is become a consuming Fire unto us, that none can come near these everlasting Burnings, much less dwell with them. Since there can be no meeting so, God hath found out the Way how Sinners may come to him, and not be consumed: He will meet with us in Jesus Christ, that living Temple, and this is the trysting Place. There was a Necessity of this Mediator, to take up the Difference, and make a Bridge over that Gulf of Separation, for us to come to God; and this is his Humane Nature, *the new and living Way, the Vail of his Flesh. God is in Christ* therefore, *reconciling the World to himself:* All the Light of Consolation and Salvation that is from God, is all embodied in this Sun of Righteousness: All the Streams of Grace and Mercy runs in the Channel of his well-beloved Son. It follows then, that God is not to be found out of Jesus Christ; and whoever is *without Christ,* is *without God in the World. God is in Christ reconciling the World,* and *therefore no Condemnation to them that are in Christ;* but God out of Christ is condemning the World, and therefore Condemnation is to all that are not in Christ. When all the Sons of *Adam* were declared Rebels, because of his and their own Rebellion, the Lord hath appointed a City of Refuge, that whosoever is pursued by the Avenger of Blood, may enter in to it, and get Protection and Safety. Without is nothing but the Sword of the Avenger, Justice reigning in all the World beside; within this City, Justice may not enter to take out any into Condemnation: And therefore those Souls that flee for Refuge, *to lay hold on the Hope set before them* in Jesus Christ, Justice may pursue them to the Ports of this City, Condemnation may follow them hard, till they enter in; but these may not enter into Ports of the City. What a miserable Estate then are these Souls in, that ly in their own Natures, in the open Fields without this City? How many foolish Men apprehend no Danger? but sport about the Ports

of the City of Refuge, and will not enter in. O! the Avenger of Blood shall be upon thee ere thou know: And if it find thee out of the City, woe unto thee, all thy Prayers and Intreaties will not prevail; Justice is blind and deaf, cannot deal partially, or respect Persons, cannot hear thy Supplications. It is strange, that Men are taken up with other petty inconsiderable Things, and yet neglect to know what this is, to be in Jesus Christ, upon which their Salvation depends.

Faith in Jesus Christ is the Soul's Flight into the City of Refuge; now none flieth but when they apprehend Danger, or are pursued. This Danger that a Soul apprehends, is Perishing and Condemnation for ever: The Pursuer is the Law of God, and his Justice; these have a Sword in their Hand, the Curse of God, and the Sentence of Condemnation. God erects a Tribunal in his Word, wherein he judgeth Men; whosever he hath a Purpose of Good-will unto, he makes the Law to enter into their Consciences, that the Offence might abound: He sends out some Messenger of Affliction, or Conviction, to bring them before the Judgment Seat, and hear their Accusation read unto them. There the Soul stands trembling, and the Conscience witnesseth and approveth all that the Word challengeth of; so that the Sinners Mouth is stopped, and can have no Excuse to this Accusation: Then the Judge pronounces the Sentence upon the guilty Person, *Cursed is every one that abideth not in all Things*, &c. The Soul cries, Guilty, O Lord, Guilty, I deserve the Curse indeed: Oh! *What shall I do to be saved?* Then the Soul looks about on the right Hand, and on the left Hand, to seek some Refuge, but there is none. Whither shall he go from him? He looks within himself, and beholds nothing within, but the accusing witnessing Conscience becomes a Tormenter: The Fire is kindled within, which feeds upon the Fewel of innumerable Sins; now the Soul is almost overwhelmed, and spies if there be any Place to flie from it self, and from that Wrath, and behold the Lord discovers a City of Refuge near Hand, where no Condemnation is, even Christ Jesus, who hath sustained the Curse, that he might redeem us from it. The Vision of Peace is here, and thither the Soul flies out of it self, and from Justice, into that discovered Righteousness of Christ's, and so *the more that the Offence abounded*; now, *the more hath Grace superabounded*: so that *there is now no more Condemnation* to him.

I beseech you consider this, and let it be written on the Table of your Hearts: There are two Tribunals that God sits upon, one out of Christ Jesus, another in Christ Jesus, there is a Throne of Justice, where no Sentence passes but pure unmixed Justice, without any Temperament of Mercy; and this all Men must once compear before. You know what a Covenant of Works God once made with us, *If thou do these Things thou shalt live*, if not, *thou shalt die the Death*. According to this we must once be judged, that Justice suffer no Prejudice. Therefore God speaks out of his Law, upon this Throne, the Language of Mount *Sinai*, he reads our Charge unto us, and because all the World is guilty, therefore the Sentence of Death is once past upon all. Now whoever of you come before this Tribunal to be judged, know that it is a subordinate Court, there is a higher Court of Mercy and Judgment, both Justice and Mercy mixed together; though Mercy be the Predominant, *Justice and Judgment*

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is the Habitation of it, but *Mercy and Truth goeth before* the Judges Face, and come neareſt Sinners, to give them Acceſs. And this you may appeal unto, from that Tribunal of Juſtice. But *there is Forgiveneſs with thee*, &c. *Pſal.* cxxx. 4, 5. And whoever comes here, Chriſt Jeſus ſits on this Throne, to abſolve him from that Sentence. If you ask what Equity is in it, is not this a Prejudice to Juſtice, and an Abomination to the Lord, to juſtifie the wicked and ungodly Sinner? I ſay, it is no Iniquity, becauſe Jeſus Chriſt hath paid the Price for us, and *was made a Curſe for our Sins, that we might be the Righteouſneſs of God in him*; and therefore it is juſt with God to forgive Sins, to relax that Sinner from the Condemnation of the Law, that flies into Jeſus Chriſt. You many anſwer Juſtice, I will not take this for God's laſt Word, I hear that all final Judgment is committed to the Son, that he may give Life to whom he will: He calls me, and to him will I go, for *he hath the Words of eternal Life*, he will *juſtifie, and who ſhall condemn?*

Now if any Man will not now arraign himſelf before the Tribunal of God's Juſtice, if he will not ſearch his Guiltineſs till his Mouth be ſtopped; and hear his Sentence of Condemnation read, and take with it: That Man can come to Jeſus Chriſt, to be abſolved, for he juſtifieth none but Self-condemned and loſt Sinners; ſo your Day is but yet coming, when you muſt anſwer to Juſtice, the Tribunal of Mercy ſhall be removed, and Chriſt ſhall ſit upon a Throne of pure Juſtice, to judge theſe who judged not themſelves. Alas! for your Loſs, the moſt part of you: I pity you, you live in great Peace and Quietneſs without the Ports of the City of Refuge. We declare unto you in the Lord's Name, you are under the Curſe of God: Will you yet ſit ſecure, and put the evil Day far from you. Oh! rather trouble your Peace for a Seaſon, with the Conſideration of your Sins, enter in Judgment with your ſelves, till you ſee nothing but periſhing in your ſelves, and there is no Hazard, becauſe he is Salvation brought near in the Goſpel. If you will not trouble your ſelves ſo much, as to judge your ſelves, then you ſhall be judged when there is no Mediator, to plead for you, none to appeal unto.

But whoſoever takes the Sentence of Condemnation unto them, and ſubſcribes to the Righteouſneſs of the Lord's Curſe upon them, we do invite all ſuch in the Lord's Name, to come in hither, even to Jeſus Chriſt, *There is no Condemnation to them that are in him.* If you ſtand ſcrupulous, making many Queſtions in ſuch a Matter of ſo great Neceſſity, you wrong your own Soul, and diſhonour him; know this, that *God is in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf*: Therefore thou condemned Sinner may come to God in Chriſt: If you ask any Warrant, we think there ſhall be no ſuch queſtioning, when you are in ſo great Neceſſity. If a Man were ſtarving without a City, and it were told him there is Plenty within, were he not a Fool that would make any more Buſineſs, but labour to enter in. This is enough to croſs all your Objections, your are in extream Neceſſity, and like to periſh within your ſelf, *He is able to ſave to the utmoſt all that come to him.* What would more, let there be then a Cloſure between abſolute Neceſſity, and ſufficient Ability to ſave: Will you yet ſtand diſputing without the City, when the Avenger of Blood is above your Head? If you will yet preſs for ſome more Ground and Warrant of believing, then I will

will tell you, all that I know is in the Word for a Ground of Faith, you have great Misery and Necessity within you; that you grant, and it is your Complaint; Christ hath Mercy and Sufficiency of Grace in him, *he is able to save to the utmost*, that you cannot deny: But I do add this Third, he is willing also to save thee, whoever will be willing to be saved by him; nay, he is more willing than thou art. If you question this, I desire you but to consider the whole Tenor of the Gospel; How many Invitations? How many Perswasions? How many Promises to those who come? Yea, how many Commands, and that Peremptory, to believe on him? Yea, how many Threatnings against you, if you will not come to him to have Life? Hath he given himself for the Sins of the World, and will he not be willing that Sinners partake of that he was at so much Pains to purchase? Think you that Christ will be content his Death should be in vain? And it should be in vain, if he did not welcome the worst Sinners: Yea, it should be in vain, if he did not draw them to him, and make them willing. But besides this, he hath promised so absolutely and freely, and fully, as there should be no Exception imaginable against it: *Him that cometh, I will not in any Case cast out*, John vi. 37. Why do you imagine any Case where Christ hath made none? Why do you Sin against your own Souls? Oh! if I were in Christ, say you, I would be well; and, Oh! that he would welcome such a Sinner. Christ answers thee in expres Terms, *Whosoever will, let him take and drink freely*. Thou declares thy Willingness in so speaking, and he declares his Willingness in so promising. Nay, thy looking afar off on him, is a Fruit of his Willingness; *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and loved you first*. If ye will not yet believe this, look upon his Command; *This is his Command, that ye believe on the Son*, 1 John iii. 23. What Warrand have ye to do any Duty he commands? and why do ye more question this? Is not this his Command? and is it not more peremptory, because a new Command, and his last Command? And when withall he boasts us in to his Son, *that ye may have Life*. Oh! who should have the Face to Question any more his Willingness? Other Grounds than these I know none: And I think if any come to Christ, or pretend to come on other Grounds, he comes not right. If the most holy Man comes not in among ungodly Sinners, if he do not walk upon the Grounds of his own extream Necessity, and Christ's Sufficiency, he cannot come to Jesus Christ. There is a Conceit among People, which if it were not so common as it is, I would not mention it, it is so ridiculous: How can I come to Christ so unclean and so guilty, nothing but Condemnation in me? If I were such and such, I would come to him. Alas! there can nothing be imagined more absurd, or contary even to Sense and Reason. If thou wert such and such, as thou fancies a Desire to be, thou wouldst not come to Christ, thou needed him not; that which thou pretends as a Reason why thou should not come, is the great Reason pressed in the Gospel, why thou should come. What Madness is this? I am so unclean, I will not come to the Fountain to wash: Wherefore was the Fountain opened, but *for Sin and Uncleanness?* and the more Uncleanness, the more Need, and the more Need, the more Reason to come: Necessity is a great Errand, and our Errand is a sufficienty Warrand. I am

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purſued by the Law, I have Condemnation within me, and nothing but Condemnation: Well then, come to Chriſt Jeſus, the City of Refuge, where no Condemnation is. Wherefore was this City appointed, but for this End? I beſeech you every one who uſeth thoſe Debates, and taketh a kind of Delight in them; know what they mean, how they wrong your own Souls, how they diſhonour Chriſt, and ſo God the Father; nay, how fooliſh and ridiculous they are; that if it were not your Perplexity indeed, they deſerved no Anſwer, but a Rebuke, or Silence. I have ſeen People take Delight in moving Objections againſt the Truth, yea, and ſtudying earneſtly how to object againſt any Anſwers given from the Truth. Alas! thou meddles to thine own Hurt, thou art upon a Way which ſhall never yield thee any Comfort, but keep thy Soul from Eſtabliſhment, as a Wave toſſed up and down. *If ye believe not,* but diſpute, *ye ſhall not be eſtabliſhed.*

But I would ſpeak a Word to theſe that have believed, that have fled for Refuge to Chriſt, Oh! it concerns you moſt of all Men to ſtudy to know this Condemnation that ye are delivered from, that ye may be thankful, and may keep cloſs within this City. I ſay, there is no Man within the World ſhould have more Thoughts, more deep and earneſt Meditations on the Curſe and Wrath of God, than theſe who are delivered from them through Chriſt; and my Reaſon is, that ye may know how great a Salvation ye have received, how great a Condemnation ye have eſcaped, and may henceforth walk as theſe who *are bought with a Price.* Your Creation makes you not your own, but his, becauſe he gave that Being: But your Redemption ſhould make you twice more his, and not your own, becauſe, when that Being was worſe than if it had not been at all, he made it over again; ſo ye are twice his: Firſt he made you with a Word; but now he hath *bought with a Price,* and that a dear Price, his Blood. Again, the keeping this Curſe always in your View and Sight, and Application of it unto your Sins, will make much Imployment for Chriſt: O how will ye often flee into that City? I think they are the greateſt Enemies of Jeſus Chriſt, and his Grace, who would have a Believer have no more uſe of the Law: I know not who can uſe the Law, if he do it not, I know not who can apply it unto Chriſt the End of it, but he: Certainly he hath not only uſe of the Commands as a Rule of Obedience, but the Curſe alſo, not to make him fear again unto Bondage, no, no, but to make him ſee always the more Neceſſity of Jeſus Chriſt, that he may take up Houſe in him, and *dwell in him.*

SERMON III.

Verſe 1. *That walk not after the Fleſh, but,* &c.

IT is difficult to determine which of theſe is the greateſt Privilege of a Chriſtian, that he is delivered from Condemnation, or that he is made to *walk according to the Spirit,* and made a new Creature: Whether we ow more to Chriſt

Christ for our Justification, or Sanctification? For he is made both to us: But it is more necessary to conjoyn them together, than to compare them with other; the one is not more necessary to be delivered from Wrath, than the other to walk according to the Spirit. I think it were an Argument of a Soul escaped Condemnation, to have the great Stream and Current of its Affections and Endeavours towards Sanctification, not that they may be accepted of God, but because they are accepted of God. It is not said, there is nothing condemnable in those that are in Christ, but *there is no Condemnation to them.* There is indeed *a Body of Death*, and *Law of Sin* within them, a Nature defiled with original Pollution, and many Streams flowing from it, which the sprinkling of the Blood of Christ in Justification doth not take away. *If any Man say there is no Sin in him, he is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him:* But here is the Grace and Mercy of God in Jesus Christ that removes the Curse, where the Sin is, that takes away the Condemnation, where all worthy of Condemnation is. And thus the Soul's Justification is parallel to Christ's Condemnation; there was in him nothing condemnable, *no Sin, no Guile in his Mouth*, yet there was Condemnation to him, because he was in stead and place of Sinners, *our Iniquities was laid on him*, not in him; *he who knew no Sin was made a Curse for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him:* So then, the Soul that flyeth in to Jesus Christ his Righteousness, though it have in it, all that deserveth Condemnation, yet there is no Condemnation to it, because his Righteousness is laid upon it, and Christ hath taken away the Curse. The innocent Son of God was condemned, therefore are guilty Sinners absolved: The Curse was applied unto *him who had no Sin*, but only *was made Sin*, or Sin laid on him, and therefore the Sentence of Absolution from the Curse is applyed unto them who have no Righteousness, but are made the Righteousness of God by free and gracious Imputation. This I speak, because of many unsavoury and unsound Expressions in this loose Generation, that there is no Sin in the justified, that Justification removes it closs, as if it had never been at all. I say, as the Condemnation of Jesus Christ did not blot out his Innocency and Holiness within him, but only Justice considered him in that Account as a Transgressor, who yet was the holy and spotless Lamb of God in himself, so likewise the Justification of a Sinner before God, doth not remove or blot out the very Corruption and Defilement of our Natures, but only scrapes out our Names out of the Roll of his Debtors, as having satisfied in our Cautioner, and considers us as righteous in that Account before God. And this likewise I speak for your use, that ye may loath and abhor your selves; as much in your selves, who are made clean by the Blood of Jesus Christ, as if ye were not washen. Nay, so much the more ye ought to remember your own Sins, which he doth not remember as Debt any more; and to be ashamed and confounded because they are pardoned: It is ordinary for Souls to look on themselves with an Eye of more Complacency in themselves, when they apprehend that God looks favourably on them: I do not think that any Soul can duely consider the gracious Aspect of God in Jesus Christ to them, but they will the more loath themselves: but I find it ordinary, that slight and inconsiderate Thoughts of Pardon, begets jolly Conceits in Men's Hearts of

them.

themſelves; and this is even the Sin of God's Children, ſomething is abated of our ſelf abhorring, when we have Peace and Favour ſpoken in to us: But I beſeech every one that believes there is no Condemnation for them, to conſider there is all Things worthy of it in them, yea, nothing but what deſerves it; and therefore let that Aſpect of God beget Self-loathing, and Self-deteſtation in you: The more you apprehend he is pleaſed with you, be ye the more diſpleaſed with your ſelves, becauſe it is not your ſelves he is pleaſed with, but his own well-beloved Son. The Day of Redemption is coming, when there ſhall be no Condemnation, and nothing condemnable either: In Heaven you ſhall be ſo, but while ye are here, this is the moſt important Duty ye are called to, to *loath your ſelves, becauſe of all your Abominations, and becauſe he is pacified towards you*, Ezek. xvi. at the cloſe, and *Chap.* xxxvi. 31. and xx. 43, 44. There is a new and ſtrange Mortification, now pleaded for by many, whoſe higheſt Advancement conſiſteth in not feeling, or knowing, or confeſſing Sin; but in being dead to the Senſe and Conviction of the ſame. Alas! whither are theſe reforming Times gone? Is not this the Spirit of Antichriſt? I confeſs it is a Mortification of Godlineſs, a crucifying of Repentance and Holineſs, a crucifying of the new Man; but it is a quickning of the old Man, in the Luſts thereof; a living to Sin; this a Part of that new (but falſly ſo called) Goſpel that is preached by ſome; which if an Angel would bring from Heaven, we ought not to believe it. *Other Foundations can no Man lay than which is laid* already, upon which the Prophets and Apoſtles are builded; even Chriſt Jeſus. Lord give the Spirit to underſtand theſe Myſteries already revealed; but ſave us from theſe new Diſcoveries and Lights. That which we have received is able to make us perfect to Salvation.

Every one pretends a Claim and Right to this Privilege of Chriſtians, to be pardoned and abſolved from Condemnation, who doth not put it out of Queſtion, though in the mean Time, *their Iniquities teſtifie againſt them*; and their Tranſgreſſions ſay in the Heart of a godly Man, that *there is no fear of God before their Eyes?* Therefore the Apoſtle deſcribes the Man that is in Jeſus Chriſt, to be ſuch an one, *That walks not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.* Not only to guard againſt the preſumptuous Fancy of thoſe that live in their Sins, that pretend to hope for Heaven, but to ſtir up every juſtified Soul to a new Manner of Converſation; ſince they are in Jeſus Chriſt. We would ſpeak a Word of two Things from this: *Firſt*, That the Scripture gives Marks and Characters of juſtified and reconciled Perſons, that they may be known by, both to themſelves, and others. Next, That the Chriſtian eſcaped Condemnation, hath a new Manner of walking, and is a new Creature in Chriſt.

It might ſeem ſtrange Thing, that this firſt, were queſtioned in this Generation; (if any the moſt clear and important Truth could paſs without ſcanning;) the very Tenor of the Scripture holds out ſo much of it. I wonder that any Man that reads this Chapter, or the Epiſtles of *James*, and *John*, ſhould have any more Doubt of it. *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commands*: Is not this a Concluſion of our State and Condition, from the Conformity of our walking to the Will of God? What Divine Truth can we be ſure of, if this be uncertain? When the beloved

Disciple, who knew how to preach Christ, asserts it in express Terms, 1 *Joh.* v. 13. *These Things have I written to you that believe, that ye may know that ye have eternal Life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God:* This very Thing was the great Scope and Purpose of that Evangelick and Divine Epistle.

I find that *Antinomians* confound this Question, that they may have the more Advantage in their Darkness. The Question is not concerning the Grounds of a Man's believing in Christ, but concerning our Assurance, or Knowledge of our believing. There is a great Mistake in Christians Practice, in confounding these two, it makes Christians very unreasonable in their Doubtings and Exercises, therefore let us have this before our Eyes; Faith in its first and pure Acting, is rather an Adherence and Cleaving of a lost Soul to Christ, than an Evidence of its Interest in him, or of his everlasting Love. You know all, that it is one Thing to know a Thing, or love a Thing, and another Thing to reflect upon it, and know that I know and love it. *John* did write to Believers that they might know they did believe, and believe yet more. These Things then are both separable, and the one is posterior to the other; *After ye believed ye were sealed.* The Perswasion of God's Love, and our Interest in Christ, is the Spirit's Seal set upon the Soul: There is a mutual Sealing here, the Soul by believing and trusting in Jesus Christ, *sets to its Seal that God is true,* as *John* speaks, *Joh.* iii. 33. When God speaks in his Law, the Soul receives that Testimony of his Justice and Holiness, subscribes to the Equity and Righteousness of the Sentence, by condemning it self. And when Christ speaks in the Gospel, the Soul seals that Doctrine of free Salvation, by approving and consenting with all its Heart to the Offer, subscribes to the Way of Salvation in Christ, and Truth of his Promises: And this is the Truth of God and Christ sealed by the Soul's Believing. Then the Spirit of Jesus Christ afterward, when he pleaseth, irradiates, and shines upon the Soul, and discovers these Things that are freely given, and witnesseth to the Conscience of the Believer, that he is a Son of God: Thus the Spirit seals the Believer, and gives his Testimony to his Truth.

Now if we speak of the Ground of the first, *viz.* of believing in Christ to Salvation, I know none, but that which is common to Sinners, and holden out in the Gospel generally to all. Our Sin, and Misery, and absolute Necessity, and Christ's Invitation of all to come, and receive his full and perfect Salvation. I think a Man should seek nothing in himself, whereupon to build his coming to Christ, though it be true, no Man can come to a Saviour, till he be convinced of Sin and Misery, yet no Man should seek Convictions as a Warrant to come to Christ for Salvation; he that is in earnest about this Question, *how shall I be saved?* I think he should not spend the Time in reflecting on, and Examination of himself, till he find something promising in himself, but from discovered Sin and Misery, pass straight way over to the Grace and Mercy of Christ, without any interveening Search of something in himself to warrand him to come; there should be nothing before the Eye of the Soul, but Sin and Misery, and absolute Necessity, compared with superabounding Grace, and Righteousness in Christ: And thus it singly devolves it self over upon Christ, and receives him as offered freely, without Money, and without Price? I know it is not possible

that

that a Soul can receive Christ till there be some preparatory convincing Work of the Law, to discover Sin and Misery: But I hold, that to look to any such Preparation, and fetch an Encouragement or Motive therefrom, to believe in Christ, is really to give him a Price for his free Waters and Wine; it is to mix in together Christ and the Law, in the Point of our Acceptation; and for Souls to go about to seek Preparations, for a Time resolving, not at all to consider the Promise of the Gospel, till they have found *them*, and Satisfaction in *them*; is nothing else, *but to go about to establish their own Righteousness, being ignorant of the Righteousness of Christ.* And therefore many do corrupt the Simplicity of the Gospel, by rigid Exactions of Preparations, and Measures of them, and by making them Conditions, or Restrictions, of Gospel-commands and Promises: As in this, *Come ye that are wearied.* And from thence they seem to exclude Persons not so qualified, from having a Warrand to believe. Alas it is a great Mistake of these and such Words, certainly these are not set down of Purpose to exclude any who will come, for, *whoever will, let them come, and take freely*: But rather to encourage such wearied and broken Souls, as conceive themselves to be the only Persons excluded; and to declare unto us in some Measure, the Nature of true Faith; that a Soul must be beaten out of it self, ere it can come to Christ. Therefore I conclude, that not only it is a ridiculous, and foolish Conceit of many Christians that use to object against believing; If I were as such or such a Person, if I did love God, if I had these Fruits of the Spirit, if I walked according to the Spirit, then I might believe. Alas! how directly opposite is this to the Terms of the Gospel? I say, if thou place Satisfaction in these, and from that Ground, come to Jesus Christ, then thou dost not come really, thou dost indeed establish thine own Righteousness. Doth any Saint, though never so holy, consider himself under such Notions of Grace, when he comes to be justified? No indeed; but as an ungodly Man, rather, he must deny all that, though he had it. And besides, it is most unreasonable, and incongruous, to seek the Fruits, before the Tree be planted; and to refuse to plant the Tree, till you can behold the Fruits of it. But also, it is contrary to the free and comfortable Doctrine of the Gospel, for a Soul to seek the Discovery of any Thing in it self, but Sin, before it apply to Jesus Christ. I say, there must be some Sense of Sin, otherwise it hath not rightly discovered Sin; but a Soul should not be at the Pains to discover that Sense of Sin, and find it out, so as to make it a Motive of believing in Christ: He ought to go straight forward, and not return as he goes; he must indeed examine himself; not to find himself a sensible humbled Sinner, that so he may have Ground of believing; but that he may find himself a lost perishing Sinner; void of all Grace and Goodness, that he may find the more Necessity of Jesus Christ: And thus I think the many Contentions about Preparations, or Conditions preparatory to believing, may be reconciled.

Now if the Question be (as it is indeed) about the Grounds of our Assurance, and Knowledge of our own Faith, certainly it is clear as the Noon-day, that as the good Tree is known by the Fruits thereof, and the Fire by the Heat thereof, so the in-dwelling of Faith in the Heart is known by its purifying of the Heart, and working by Love, it makes a Man a

new Creature; so that he, and others may see the Difference: Neither is this any Derogation to the free Grace of Christ, or any establishing of our own Righteousness (except Men be so afraid to establish their own Righteousness, that they will have no Holiness at all, but abandon it quite, for fear of trusting in it, which is a Remedy worse than the Disease) because I make it not a Ground of my Acceptation before God, but only a naked Evidence of my believing in Christ, and being accepted of God: It being known that these have a necessary Connection together in the Scriptures, and it being also known that the one is more obvious and easie to be discerned than the other. Sure I am, the Lamb's Book of Life is a great Mystery, and unless this be granted, I see not but every Man's Regeneration and Change shall be as dark and hidden, as the hidden and secret Decrees of God's Election; for the Spirit may immediately reveal both the one and the other. Is it any Derogation to the Grace of Christ, to know what is freely given us? Doth it not rather commend his Grace: When a Soul looks upon it self, beautified with his Comeliness, and adorned with his Graces, and loaths it self in it self, and ascribes all the Honour and Praise to him? Is it not more Injury to the Fountain and Fulness of Grace in Christ, not to see the Streams of it at all, nor to consider them, than to behold the Streams of Grace that flows out of this Fountain, as coming out of it? I think Christians may be ready to idolize their Graces, and make them Mediators, when they are known; but is this a good Remedy of that Evil, to abandon all Sight and Knowledge of the *Things freely given us of God?* Shall we not speak of the Freeness of Grace, because Mens Corruptions turn Grace into carnal Liberty, and Wantonness? If these Graces be be in us, sure I am, 'tis no Vertue to be ignorant of them, but rather a Weakness and Darkness: It must then be the Light and Grace of God, to know them, and from thence to conclude, that Assurance of Faith, which is not a forced, ungrounded Perswasion, and strong Fancy, without any discovered Reason of it. Sure I am, the Apostle's Counsel is, *to make our Election sure*, by *making our calling sure.* How shall any venture to look in to these Secrets of *the Lamb's Book of Life*, and read their Name there, undoubtedly they belong not to us, they are a Light inaccessible, that will but confound and darken us more? Therefore, whoever would know their Election, according to the Scriptures, must read the Transcript, and Copy of the Book of Life, which is written in the Hearts and Souls of the Elect; the Thoughts of God are written in his Works upon the Spirits of Men; his Election hath a Seal upon it. *The Lord knoweth who are his*, and who can break up this Seal? *Who hath understood the Mind of the Lord?* None can, until the Lord write over his Thoughts in some Characters of his Spirit, and of the new Creature, in some Lineaments and Draughts of his own Image, that it may be known they are *the Epistle of Christ, not written with Ink and Paper, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in Tables of Stone, but in the fleshly Tables of the Heart*; 2 Cor. iii. 3. Christ writes his everlasting Thoughts of Love, and Goodwill to us in this Epistle; and that we may not think this doth extol the Creature, and abase Christ, it is added, *Ver. 5. Not that we are sufficient of our selves, but our Sufficiency is of God.* The seeing of Grace in our selves, doth not prejudge the Grace of God, unless we see it in-

independent of the Fountain, and behold not the true Rise of it, that we may have no Matter to glory of. It is not a safe Way of beholding the Sun, to look straight on it, it is too dazling to our weak Eyes; you shall not well take it up so; but the best Way is to look on it in Water, then we shall more stedfastly behold it: God's everlasting Love, and the Redemption of Jesus Christ, is too glorious an Object to behold with the Eyes of Flesh; such Objects certainly must astonish and strike the Spirits of Men with their transcendant Brightness: Therefore we must look on the Beams of this Sun, as they are reflected in our Hearts; and so behold the Conformity of our Souls, wrought by his Spirit unto his Will; and then we shall know the Thoughts of his Soul to us. If Men shall at the first flight climb so high, as to be perswaded of God's eternal Love, and Christ's Purchase for them in particular, they can do no more, but scorch their Wings, and melt the Wax off them, till they fall down from that Heaven of their ungrounded Perswasion, into a Pit of Desparation: The Scripture-way is to go downward once, that ye may go up; first go down in your selves, and make your Calling sure, and then you may rise up to God, and make your Election sure: You must come by this Circle; there is no passing by a direct Line, and straight thorow, unless by the immediate Revelation of the Spirit, which is not ordinary and constant, and so not to be pretended unto.

I confess, that sometimes the Spirit may intimate to the Soul, God's Thoughts towards it, and its own State and Condition, by an immediate overpowering Testimony, that puts to Silence all Doubts and Objections, that needs no other Work or Mark to evidence the Sincerity and Reality of it; that Light of the Spirit shall be seen in its own Light, and needs not that any witness of it. The Spirit of God sometimes may speak to a Soul: *Son, be of good Comfort, thy Sins are forgiven thee*: This may break into the Soul as a Beam, darted from Heaven, without Reference to any Work of the Spirit upon the Heart, or Word of Scripture, as a Mids or Mean to apply it: But this is more extraordinary; the ordinary Testimony of the Spirit is certainly conjoined with the Testimony of our own Consciences, *Rom.* viii. 16. *And our Consciences bear witness of the Work of the Spirit in us*, which the Spirit discovers to be according to the Word. The Spirit makes known to us Things that are freely given, but, *by comparing Things Spiritual with Spiritual*, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 13. The Fruit and special Work of the Holy Ghost in us, is the *Medium*, and the Spirit's Light irradiates and shines upon it, and makes the Heart to see them clearly: For, though we be the Children of Light, yet our Light hath so much Darkness, as there must be a supervenient and accessory Light of the Spirit, to discover that Light unto us. Now what is all this to us, I fear that there be many ungrounded Perswasions amongus, that many build on a sandy Foundation, even a strong Opinion that it is well with them, without any Examination of their Souls and Conversations according to the Word, and this certainly when the Tempest blows, cannot stand. Some teach, that no Man should question whether he believe or not, but presently believe: I think none can believe too suddenly, 'tis always in Season, *nunquam sera est fides nec pœnitentia*, 'tis never late, in respect of the Promise, and 'tis never too early, in respect of a Man's Case. But I cannot think any Man can believe, till the Spirit have convinced

him

him of his Unbelief; And therefore, I would think the moſt Part of Men nearer Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, if they knew they wanted Faith: Nay, 'tis a Part of Faith, and believing God in his Word, and ſetting to our Seal, that God is true, for a Man to take with his Unbelief, and his natural Inability, yea, Averſeneſs to it. I would think that theſe who could not believe in Chriſt, becauſe they ſought Honour one of another, and went about to kill him, they had done well to have taken with that Challenge of Chriſt's, and if Men ought to take with their Sin, they ought to ſearch and try their Sin, that they may find it out, to take with it. I wonder, ſince *Antinomians* make Unbelief the only Sin in the World, that they cannot endure the Diſcovery and Confeſſion of it; it ſeems they do not think it ſo heinous a Sin. I confeſs, no Man ſhould of Purpoſe abſtain from believing in Chriſt, till he find out, whether he hath believed or not; but what ever hath been, he is bound preſently to act Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, to flie unto him, as a loſt Sinner, to a ſaving Mediator. But that every Man is bound to perſwade himſelf at the firſt, that God hath loved him, and Chriſt redeemed him, is the Hope of the Hypocrite, like a Spider's Web, which when leaned to, it ſhall not ſtand; that Man's Expectation ſhall periſh, he hath kindled Sparks of his own, a Wild-fire, and walketh not in the true Light of the Word, and ſo muſt ly down in Sorrow. Many of you deceive your ſelves, and none can perſwade you that ye do deceive your ſelves, ſuch is the Strength of that Deluſion, and Dream. 'Tis the great Part of the Heart's Deceitfulneſs, to flatter it ſelf in its own Eyes, to make a Man conceive well of himſelf and his Heart. I beſeech you, do not venture your Soul's Salvation to ſuch groundleſs Opinions; never to queſtion the Matter, is to leave it always uncertain. If you would judge your ſelves according to the Scriptures, many of you have the Marks and Characters of theſe who are kept without the City, and are to have *their Part in the Lake of Fire*. Is there no Condemnation for you, who have never condemned your ſelves? Certainly the more you are averſe to condemn your ſelves, this ſticks the cloſſer to you. You are not all in Chriſt, *all are not Iſrael who are of Iſrael*, many, (nay the moſt Part) are but ſaid Chriſtians, have no real Union with Chriſt, or Principle of Life from him; your Love you carry to your ſelves, makes you eaſily believe well of your ſelves; know, that Self-love can blind the Eyes, and make you apprehend that God loves you alſo. Nay, every one readily fancies that to be, which he deſires to be. I beſeech you, conſider if you have any Ground for your Hopes, and Confidences, but ſuch as theſe that will not bear out always. It would be no Diſadvantage to you, to have your Hope ſhaken, that in ſtead of a vain Preſumption, you may have the Anchor of Hope, which ſhall be fixed within the Vail. I think one Thing keeps Men far from the Kingdom of God, becauſe they know not that they believe not in him: We had gained much Ground on you by the Word, if we could perſwade you, that ye believe not, and have not believed from the Womb. We might then ſay to you, as Chriſt to his Diſciples, *ye believe in God, believe alſo in me:* Ye have given Credit to God the Judge, and Law-giver, pronouncing a Curſe on you, and a Sentence that ye have Hearts deſparately wicked, now, *believe alſo in me*, the Redeemer: Ye have believed God

God in the Law, in as far as ye have judged your ſelves under Sin and Wrath, now believe *Me* in the Goſpel, that brings a Ranſom from Wrath, and a Remedy for Sin. Tis this very Unbelief, that is the Original of the World's Periſhing, Unbelief of the Law, ye do not conſider ye are under the Condemnation of it, ye do not believe that ye have not yet fled to Jeſus Chriſt to eſcape; and theſe two keep Souls in a deep Sleep, till Judgment awake them.

But unto every one of you, I would give this Direction, let not Examination of what you are, hinder you from that which is your chief Duty, and his chief Commandment, to believe in him. I know many Chriſtians are puzled in the Matter of their Intereſt, and always wavering, becauſe they are more taken up with that which is but a Matter of Comfort and Joy, than that which is his greateſt Honour and Glory. I ſay, to conſider the precious Promiſes, to believe the Excellency and Vertue of Jeſus Chriſt, and love him in your Souls, and delight in him, is the weightieſt Matter of the Goſpel; to go out of your ſelves daily into his Fulneſs, to endeavour new Diſcoveries of your own Naughtineſs, and his Grace, this is the new and great Commandment of the Goſpel, the Obedience of it is the moſt eſſential Part of a chriſtian Walk. Now again, to know that ye do believe, and to diſcern your Intereſt in Chriſt, this is but a Matter of Comfort, and of the ſecond Concernment: Therefore, I ſay, when ever ye cannot be clear in this, ye ſhould be always exerciſed in the firſt. For 'tis that we are firſt called to, and if Souls were more exerciſed that Way, in the Conſideration and Belief of the very general Truths and Promiſes of the Goſpel, I doubt not, but the Light of theſe would clear up their particular Intereſt in due Time; *theſe Things ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* It is ſtill ſafeſt to wave ſuch a Queſtion of Intereſt, when 'tis plunging, becauſe it puts you off your ſpecial Duty, and its Satan's Intent in it. It were better if ye do queſtion, preſently to believe and abide in him, till it were put out of Queſtion.

SERMON IV.

Verſe 1. *That walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.*

CHRIST is made to us of God, both Righteouſneſs and Sanctification: And therefore, theſe who are in Chriſt, do not only eſcape Condemnation, but they *walk according to the Spirit, and not according to the Fleſh.* Theſe two are the Sum of the Goſpel, there is not a greater Argument to holy walking than this, *there is no Condemnation* for you, neither is there a greater Evidence of a Soul eſcaped Condemnation, than *walking according to the Spirit.* We have ſpoken ſomething in general of the Evidence that may be had of a Man's

a Man's State, from his walking, and the Spirit's working in him; we would now ſpeak of the Conjunction of theſe two, and the Influence that that Privilege hath on this Duty, and ſomething of the Nature of this Deſcription, *who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.*

In the Creation of Man, Man was compoſed of Soul and Body, there was a right Order, and Subordination of theſe, ſuitable to their Nature, in his Soul he reached Angels above, in his Body he was like the Beaſts below; and this Part, his Fleſh, was a Servant to the Soul, that was acted and affected according to the Deſires and Motives of the Soul. Now Sin entring, as it hath defaced all the Beauty of the Creation, as it hath miſplaced Man, and driven him out from that due Line of Subordination to God his Maker, (for he would have been equal to God,) ſo it hath perverted this beautiful Order in Men, and turned it juſt contrary, hath made *the Servant to ride on Horſes, and the Prince to walk on Foot.* This is the juſt Puniſhment of our firſt Sin. *Adam's* Soul was placed by Creation under the ſole Command of its Creator, above all the Creatures, and his own Senſes, but in one Sin, he proudly exalted himſelf above God, and lamen ably ſubjected himſelf below his Senſes, by hearkening to their Perſwaſion, *he ſaw it was good, and taſted it, and it was ſweet,* and ſo he ate of it. What a ſtrange Way was this? To be like God, he made himſelf unlike himſelf, liker the miſerable Beaſts. Now I ſay, this is the deſerved Puniſhment of Man, his Soul that was a free Prince, is made a Bond-ſlave to the Luſts of his Fleſh; Fleſh hath gotten the Throne, and keeps it, and lords over the whole Man. Now therefore it is, that the whole Man unregenerate, is called Fleſh, as if he had no immortal Spirit, *John* iii. 6. *That which is born of the Fleſh is Fleſh,* and this Chap. *Ver.* 8. here a Deſcription of natural Men, *they that are in the Fleſh.* Becauſe Fleſh is the predominant Part that hath captivate a Man's Reaſon and Will. Nay, not only the groſſer Corruptions in a Man, that have their Uſe and Seat in his Fleſh and Body, are under that Name, but take the whole Nature of Man, that which is moſt excellent in him, his Soul and Spirit; his Light and Underſtanding, the moſt refined Principles of his Converſation, all theſe are now but *Fleſh:* Nay, not only ſuch natural Gifts, and Illuminations, but even the Light of the Goſpel, and Law of God, that ſomeway enters his Soul, changeth the Nature and Name, its all but Darkneſs and *Fleſh* in him, becauſe the Fleſh hath a Dominion over all that, the Clouds and Vapours that ariſeth from the Fleſh, bemiſts and obſcures all theſe, the Corruptions of the Soul is moſt ſtrengthned in this Sort, and moſt vented here: Sin's become connatural to the Fleſh, and ſo a Man by the Fleſh, is enſnared and ſubjected to Sin. Chriſt comprehends all our Prerogatives and Endowments under this, *John* i. 13. *born not of Fleſh and Blood:* And *Matth.* xvi. 17. *Fleſh and Blood hath not revealed theſe Things to thee.* Even all the Outwards of Religion, and all the common Privileges of Chriſtians may be called ſo: What hath *Abraham* found according to the Fleſh? *Rom.* iv. 1. *Phil.* iii. 3. Which imports ſo much, that all thoſe outward Privileges, many Illuminations, and Reformations, may ſo far conſiſt with the Corruption of Man's Nature, may unite ſo with that, as to have one Name with it; 'tis not all able to conquer our Fleſh, but our Fleſh rather ſubdues all that, and makes it ſerve it ſelf, till a ſtronger than

it come, even the Spirit to ſubdue it, and caſt it out of the Houſe. Thus the Image of God in Man is defaced: Nay, the very Image and Nature of Man, as Man, ſpoiled; the firſt Creation, Sin hath marr'd, and diſorder'd it. Now, when this ſecond Creation, or Regeneration comes, the Creature is made new, and formed again by the powerful Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, this Change is made, Fleſh is put out of the Throne, as an Uſurper, the Spirit and Soul of a Man, is put in a Throne above it; but is placed according to its due Order, under a holy and ſpiritual Law of God. And thus Jeſus Chriſt is the Repairer of the Breaches, and Reſtorer of the ancient Paths, and old Waſtes to dwell in. Now, the Soul hath a new Rule eſtabliſhed to act according to, and new Principles to act from. He whoſe Courſe of Walking was after the corrupt Dictates and Commands of his fleſhly Affections, and was of no higher Strain, than his own Sparks of Nature, and acquired Light would lead him to, now he hath a new Rule eſtabliſhed, the Spirit ſpeaking in the Word to him, and pointing out the Way to him: And there is a new Principle, that Spirit leading him in all Truth, and quickning him to walk in it: Now this is the Soul's perfect Liberty, to be from under the Dominion of Sin, and Luſts, and thus the Son makes free indeed, by the free Spirit: The Son was made a Servant, that we might be made free, *no more Servants of Sin in the Luſts thereof*: And the Spirit of the Lord, where he comes, there is Liberty, there the Spirit and reaſonable Soul of a Man is elevated into its firſt native Dignity; there the baſe Fleſh is dethroned, and made to ſerve the Spirit and Soul in a Man. Chriſt is indeed the greateſt Friend of Men, as they are Men, Sin made us Beaſts, Chriſt makes us Men. Unbelievers are unreaſonable Men, ἄλογοι brutiſh, yea, in a manner Beaſts; this is an ordinary Compellation in Scripture, Faith makes a Man reaſonable, it gives the ſaving and ſanctified Uſe of Reaſon; 'tis a Shame for any Man to be a Slave to his Luſts and Paſſions, 'tis the Character of a Beaſt upon him, he that is led by Senſes and Affections, is degenerated from humane Nature; and yet ſuch are all out of Chriſt, Sin reigns in them, and Fleſh reigns, and the Principles of Light and Reaſon within are captivated, incarcerated within a Corner of their Minds. We ſee the generally received Truths among Men, *that God is, that he is holy, and juſt, and good*; *that Haven and Hell is*, theſe are altogether ineffectual, and have no Influence on Mens Converſations, no more than if they were not known, even becauſe the Truth is detained in Unrighteouſneſs, the Corruptions of Mens Fleſh are ſo rank, that they overgrow all this Seed of Truth, and choaks it, as the Thorns did the Seed, *Matth.* xv. 7. Now, for you, who are called of Jeſus Chriſt, O know what ye are called unto. 'Tis a Liberty indeed, a Privilege indeed, ye are no more Debtors to the Fleſh; Chriſt hath looſed that Obligation of Servitude to it. O let it be a Shame unto you, who are Chriſtians, to walk ſo any more, to be entangled any more in that Yoke of Bondage. *He that ruleth his Spirit, is greater than the mighty, than he that taketh a City.* Thus we are called to be more than Conquerours; others when they conquer the World, they are Slaves to their own Luſts, but let it be far from you to be ſo, ye ought to conquer your ſelf, which is more than to conquer the World; 'tis not only unbeſeeming a Chriſtian, to be led with Paſſions and Luſts, but 'tis below a Man, if Men were not now

through Sin below Beasts. I beseech you aspire unto, and hold fast the Liberty Christ hath obtained to you, be not fashioned any more according to former Lusts, know, ye are Men, that ye have reasonable and immortal Spirits in you, why will ye then walk as Beasts? Understand O brutish, and *ye Fools, when will ye be wise?* But I say more, know, ye are Christians, and this is more than to be a Man, 'tis to be a divine Man, one Partaker of the Divine Nature, and who is to walk accordingly. Christians are called to a new Manner of Walking, and this Walking is a Fruit that comes out of the Root of Faith, whereby they are implanted in Christ: You see these agree well together, *these who are in Christ, walk not after the Flesh*, &c. Walking after the Flesh, is the common Walk of the World, who are without God and without Christ; But Christ gives no Latitude to such a Walk; this is a new Nature to be in Christ, and therefore, it must have new Operations, to walk *after the Spirit*. While we look upon the Conversations of the most Part of Men, they may be a Commentary to expound this Part of the Words, what it is to walk *after the Flesh*. *The Works of the Flesh* (saith the Apostle to *Gal.* v. 19.) *are manifest*; and indeed they are manifest, because written in great Letters on the Out-side of many in the visible Church, that who runs may read them: Do but read that Catalogue in *Paul*, and then come and see them in Congregations. It is not so doubtful and subtile a Matter, to know that many are yet without the Verge of Christ Jesus, without the City of Refuge, you may see their Mark on their Brow. Is not Drunkenness, which is so frequent, a palpable Evidence of this? Your Envyings, Revilings, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Fornications, and such like: Oh, do not deceive your selves! there is no Room in Jesus Christ, for such Impurities and Impieties. There is no Toleration of Sin within this City and Kingdom; *Sinners* are indeed pardoned, yea, received and accepted; Drunkards, unclean Persons, *&c.* are not excluded from entering here, but they must renounce these Lusts, if they would stay here; Christ will not keep both, he must either cast out the Sin, or the Sinner with it, if he will not part with it. I beseech you, know what ye walk after; the Flesh is your Leader, and whither will it lead you? (O! 'tis sad to think on it,) to Perdition: *Ver.* 8. *If ye live after the Flesh, ye shall die.* Ye think *Flesh* your great Friend, ye do all ye can to satisfie and please it; and, O how pleasant is the Satisfaction of your Flesh to you? Ye think it Liberty to follow it, and counts it Bonds and Cords to be restrained: But, Oh! know and consider, that Flesh will lead you by the Kingdom; that Guide of your Way, to which ye committed your self, will lead you by Heaven, *Gal.* v. 21. 'Tis a blind Guide; Corruption, and Humour, and Will have no Eyes, no discerning of that Pit of eternal Misery: They choose the Way that is best pathed and troden, that is easiest, and most walk into; and this certainly will lead you straight into this Pit of Darkness. Be called off this Way, from following your blind Lusts, and rather suffer them to be crucified; be avenged on them for your two Eyes that they have put out, and their treacherous Dealing to you, in leading you to Destruction the high Way. Come in to Christ Jesus, and ye shall get a new Guide of the Way, *the Spirit, that shall lead you in all Truth*, unto the blessed and eternal Life. Christ is the *Way* ye must walk in, and the *Life* that we must go into at the End of our Way, and

and the *Truth* according to which we must walk; now he hath given his Spirit the Comforter to be our Leader in this Way, according to this Rule and Pattern, unto that Life: In a Word, the Spirit shall lead you the straight Way unto Christ; you shall begin in him, and end in him; he shall lead you from Grace to Glory; the Spirit that came down from Heaven, shall lead you back to Heaven: All your Walk is within the Compass of Christ, out of him is no Way to Heaven.

But we must not take this so grosly, as if no other Thing were a walking after the Flesh, but the gross Abominations among Men, though even these will scrape a great Number from being in Christ Jesus; but it must be further enlarged, to the Motions and Affections of the unrenewed Spirit, and the common Principles according to which Men walk. And therefore the Apostle, *Col.* iii. and *Gal.* v. nameth many Things among the Works of the Flesh, and Members of the old Man, which I doubt, many will account so of: Some natural Passions, that we account nothing of, because common, as Anger, Wrath, Covetousness; what Man is there amongst us, in whom some of these mentioned stirs not? Many of your Hearts and Eyes are given to Covetousness; your Souls bow downward as your Bodies do, and many Times before your Bodies. Is not the Heart of Men upon this World, and cannot rise above to a Treasure in Heaven? And therefore your Callings, otherways lawful, and all your Pains and Endeavours in them, hath this Seal of the Flesh stamped on them, and passeth no otherways with God. We see how rank the Corruptions of Men are, Anger domineering in them, and leading them often captive; and this is counted a light Matter, but it is not so in Scripture: How often is it branded with Folly, by the wise Man? And this Folly is even the natural fleshly Corruption that Men are born with; and in how many doth it rise up to the Elevation of Malice and Hatred of others? And then it carries the Image of the Devil, rather than of humane Infirmity. And if we suppose a Man not much given to any of these, yet what a Spirit of Pride and Self-love is in every Man, even these that carry the lowest Sail, and the meanest Port among Men: These that are affable and courteous, and these that seem most condescending to Inferiours, and Equals, yet alas! this evil is more deeply engraven on the Spirit. If a Man could but watch over his Heart, and observe all the secret Reflections of it, all the Comparisons it makes, all the Desires of Applause and Favour among Men, all the Surmises and Stirrings of Spirit upon any Affront, O how would they discover diabolick Pride? This Sin is the more natural and inbred, for that it is our Mother-sin, that brought us down from our Excellency; this Weed grows upon a Glass-window, and upon a Dung-hill, it lodges in Palaces and Cottages: Nay, it will spring and grow out of a pretended Humility, and low Carriage. In a Word, the ambitious Designs of Men, the large Appetite of earthly Things, the over-weaning Conceit of our selves, and Love to our selves, the stirring of our Affections, without observing a Rule, upon unlawful Objects, or in an unlawful Manner, all these are common to Men, and Men walk after them. Every Man hath some Predominant or Idol, that takes him most up; some are finer and subtiler than others, some their Pleasures and Gains without, others their own Gifts and Parts, within; but both are alike odious before

God, and both groſs *Fleſh* and Corruption before him.

There are two Errors among Men, concerning this ſpiritual Walking, the one is the Doctrine of ſome in theſe Days, the other is the practical Error of many of us. Many pretending to ſome near and high Diſcoveries, as to Chriſt, and the Spirit, have fallen upon the moſt refined and ſpiritualized *Fleſh*, inſtead of the Spirit indeed; they ſeparate the Spirit from the Word, and reckons the Word and Law of God, *which was a Lamp to* David's *Feet*, among the *fleſhly Rudiments of the World*. But if they ſpeak not *according to the Law and Teſtimony*, (ſaith *Iſaiah*) it is *becauſe there is no Light in them*: Thus their new Light is but an old Darkneſs, that could not endure even the darker Light of the Prophets. If they ſpeak not according to the Word, it is becauſe there is no Spirit in them. Is it not the Spirit the Comforter, which Chriſt promiſed to ſend to the Apoſtles, and *all that ſhould believe in his Name through their Word?* For that Spirit was *a Spirit of Truth, that ſhould lead into all Truth*: And leaſt Men ſhould father their own Fancies and Imaginations on the Spirit of God, Chriſt adds, *he ſhall bring all Things to your Remembrance*: Theſe Things that Chriſt hath ſpoken, and we have here written. The holy Apoſtle to the *Col.* iii. when he reproves the Works of the Fleſh, and declares they had put them off, he commends unto them, in oppoſition to theſe, *Let the Word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all Wiſdom, teaching one another in Pſalms and ſpiritual Songs, with Grace in your Hearts to the Lord*, Ver. 16. Here the Spirit, not caſting out the *Word*, but bringing it in plentifully, and ſweetly agreeing with it. The Spirit that Chriſt ſent, did not put Men above Ordinances, but above Corruptions, and the Body of Death in them: 'Tis a poor and eaſy Victory to ſubdue Grace and Ordinances; every Slave of the Devil doth that: I fear, as Men and Angels fell from their own Dignity, by aſpiring higher, ſo theſe that will not be content with the Eſtate of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, but ſoar up in a higher Strain of Spirit, and trample on that Miniſtration, as fleſhly and carnal, I fear they fall from Jeſus Chriſt, and come into greater Condemnation. 'Tis true indeed, 2 *Cor.* iii. 6. *The Letter killeth*, that is, the Covenant of Works preacheth now nothing but Condemnation to Men, but the Spirit of the Goſpel giveth Life; nay, even the Goſpel ſeparated from *the Spirit of Life* in Jeſus, is *but a Savour of Death* to Souls. Shall we therefore ſeparate the Spirit from the Goſpel and Word, becauſe the Word alone cannot quicken us? *David* knew how to reconcile this, *Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy Word*, Pſal. cxix. 25. *Thy Spirit is good, lead me to the Land of Uprightneſs, and quicken me*, Pſal. cxliii. 10, 11. The Word was his Rule, and the Spirit applyed his Soul to the Rule: The Word holds out the preſent Pattern we ſhould be conformed unto; now if there be no more, a Man may look all his Days on it, and yet not be changed; but the Spirit within, tranſforms and changes a Man's Soul to more and more Conformity to that Pattern, by beholding it. If a Man ſhall ſhut his Eyes on the Pattern, he cannot know what he is, and ought to be; if he look only on the Spirit's Work within, and make that his Rule, he takes an imperfect Rule, and an incompleat Copy; and yet this is the higheſt Attainment of theſe Aſpirers to new Light; they have forſaken the Word as their Rule, and inſtead of it, have another

ther Law within them, as much as is already written on their Hearts, which is in ſubſtance this (as they ſuppoſe) I am bound to do no more than I have already Power to do; I am not to endeavour more Holineſs than I have already. Theſe Men are indeed perfect here in their own Apprehenſion; and do not know in Part, and believe in Part, and obey in part, becauſe they are advanced the Length of their own Law and Rule, their Rule being of no Perfection. *Paul* was not ſo, but forgetting what he had attained, he followed on to what was before him, and was ſtill reaching forward. Let not us, my Brethren, believe every Spirit, and every Doctrine that comes out under that Name; Chriſt hath forewarned us, pray for more of that Spirit, which may quicken the Word to us, and quicken us to obey the Word; there muſt be a mutual enlivening, the Word muſt be made the Miniſtration of Life, by the Spirit of Jeſus, which can uſe it *as a Sword, to divide the Soul and Spirit*; and we muſt be quickned to the Obedience of the Truth in the Word. The Word is the Seed incorruptible; but it cannot beget us, or be a Principle of new Life within us, except a living Spirit come alongs to our Hearts. Know that the Word is your Pattern and Rule; the Spirit your Leader and Helper, whoſe Vertue and Power muſt conform you to that Rule, 1 *Pet.* i. 22. *Peter* joins theſe two, the Purification and Cleanſing of the Soul, which Chriſt attributes to the Word, *ye are clean through the Word I have ſpoken*, Joh. xv. 3. *Peter* attributes it to the Spirit working according to the Pattern of Truth. 'Tis true, the Spirit of God needs no Pattern to look to; nay, but we muſt have it, and eye it, elſe we know not the Spirit of Truth from a Lie and Deluſion; we cannot try the Spirits but by this Rule; and it is by making us ſtedfaſtly look on this glorious Pattern in the Word, and the Example of Chriſt Jeſus his Life, that we are conformed unto Chriſt, *as by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 13. Certainly that muſt be fleſhly walking, which is rather conformed unto the Imaginations of a Man's own Heart, than the bleſſed Will of God revealed in his Word. Can ſuch walking pleaſe God, when a Man will not ſo much as hearken to what is God's Will and Pleaſure? As other Hereſies, ſo eſpecially *this*, is a Work of the Fleſh.

Now there is another Principle amongſt many of us; we account it ſpiritual Walking, to be ſeparated from the groſs Pollutions of the World; to have a Carriage blameleſs before Men: This is the Notion that the Multitude fancy of it. Be not deceived, you may paſs the Cenſure of all Men, and be unreproveable among them, and yet be but Walkers after the Fleſh. It is not what ye are before the World can prove you ſpiritual Men, though it may prove many of you carnal. Your Out-ſide may demonſtrate of many of you, that ye walk after the Fleſh; and if ye will not believe it, I ask you, if ye think Drunkenneſs a walking in the Spirit? Do ye think ye are following the Spirit of God, in Uncleanneſs? Is it not that Holy Spirit that purgeth from all Filthineſs? Look but what your Walk is, ye that are not ſo much as conformed to the Letter of the Word in any Thing; who cares not to read the Scriptures, and meditate on them: Is this walking after the Spirit of Truth? If Drunkenneſs, Railing, Contention, Wrath, Envy, Covetouſneſs, and ſuch like, be the Spirit's Way, then I confeſs, many of you walk after the Spirit; but if theſe be the manifeſt Works of

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he Fleſh, and manifeſtly your Way and Work, then why dream ye that ye are Chriſtians?

But I ſuppoſe, that you could be charged with none of theſe outward Things, that you had a Form of Religion and Godlineſs, yet I ſay, all that is viſible before Men, cannot prove you to be ſpiritual Walkers. Remember, it is a Spirit ye muſt walk after; now, what ſhall be the chief Agent here? Sure, not the Body, what Fellowſhip can your Body have with him that is a Spirit? the Body indeed may worſhip that eternal Spirit, being acted by the Spirit, but I ſay, that alone can never prove you to be Chriſtians; we muſt then lay aſide a Number of Profeſſors, who have no other Ground of Confidence but ſuch Things as may be ſeen of Men, and if they would enter their Hearts, how many vain Thoughts lodge there? How little of God is there? God is not almoſt in all our Thoughts, we give a Morning and Evening Salutation, but there is no more of God, all the Day throughout, and is this walking *after the Spirit*, which imports a Conſtancy? And what Part can be ſpared moſt, but the Spirit of a Man? The Body is diſtracted with other neceſſary Things, but we might always ſpare our Souls to God. Now, thus ſhould a Man obey that Command, *Pray always*, 'tis impoſſible that he ſhould do nothing elſe but pray in an expreſs formal Way, but the Soul's Walking with God, between Times of Prayer, ſhould compenſe that; and thus Prayer is continued, though not in it ſelf, yet in Meditation on God, which hath in it the Seed of all Worſhip, and is virtually Prayer and Thankſgiving, and all Duties.

Let us then conſider, If our Bodies be not more exerciſed in Religion than our Souls, yea, if they be not the chief Agents; how many Impertinencies, and Roveries, and Wandrings, are throughout the Day? The moſt Part of our Converſation, if it be not profane, yet it is vain, that is, unprofitable in the World. It neither advantageth us ſpiritually, nor glorifies God, it is almoſt to no Purpoſe; and this is enough to make it all *Fleſh*. And for our Thoughts, how do they go unlimited and unreſtrained? like a wild Aſs, traverſing her Ways, and gadding about, fixed on nothing, at leaſt not on God; nay, fixed on any Thing but God. If it be ſpiritual Service, ſhould it not carry the Seal of our Spirit and Affection on it? We are as ſo many Shadows walking, as Pictures and Statues of Chriſtians, without the Soul and Life, which conſiſts in the Temper and Diſpoſition of the Spirit and Soul towards God.

SER-

SERMON V.

Verſ. 1. *That walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.*

IT is no Wonder that we cannot ſpeak any Thing to Purpoſe of this Subject, and that you do not hear with Fruit, becauſe it is indeed a Myſtery to our Judgments, and a great Stranger to our Practice. There is ſo little of the Spirit, both in Teachers, and thoſe that come to be taught, that we can but ſpeak of it as an unknown Thing, and cannot make you to conceive it; in the living Notion of it as it is. Only we may ſay in general, it is certainly a divine Thing, and another Thing than our common or religious Walk is. It is little Experience, ſo we can know the leſs of it; but this much we ſhould know, it is another Thing than we have attained, 'tis above us, and yet ſuch a Thing as we are called to aſpire unto. How ſhould it ſtir up in our Spirits a holy Fire of Ambition to be at ſuch a Thing, when we hear it is a Thing attainable; nay, when Chriſt calls us unto himſelf, that we may thus walk with him: I would have Chriſtians, Men of great and big Projects and Reſolutions, of high and illimited Deſires, not ſatisfied with their Attainments, but ſtill aſpiring unto more of God, more Conformity to his Will, more walking *after the Spirit*, more Separation from the Courſe of the World, and this is indeed to be of a divine Spirit. The divine Nature is here, as it were, in a State of Violence, out of its own Element. Now, 'tis known by this, if it be ſtill moving upwards, taking no reſt in this Place, and theſe Meaſures and Degrees, but upon a continual Motion towards the proper Center of it, God, his Holineſs and Spirit.

We deſire to ſpeak a Word of theſe Three. *1ſt*. The Nature of the Spiritual Walking. *Next*, Its Connection and Union with that bleſſed State of Non-condemnation: And *then* of the Order of this, how it flows from a Man's being implanted in Chriſt Jeſus: Which Three, are conſiderable in the Words.

This ſpiritual Walking is according to a ſpiritual Rule, from ſpiritual Principles, for ſpiritual Ends. Theſe Three being eſtabliſhed aright, the Walk is even the Motion of a Chriſtian within the Compaſs of theſe, it is according to the Word, as the holy Rule, 'tis from the Faith and Love of Jeſus Chriſt, as the predominant Principles: Nay, from the Spirit of Jeſus, living in the Heart by Faith, and dwelling in it by Love, as the firſt Wheel of this Motion, the *Primum Mobile*; and as it begins in the Spirit, ſo it ends there, in the Glory of Jeſus Chriſt, and our heavenly Father: Conſider this then, it is not a lawleſs Walking and irregular Walk, it is according to the Rule, and the Rule is perfect,

perfect, and it is a Motion to Perfection, not a Rest in what is now attained to. The Course of this World is the Way and Rule of the Children of Disobedience, *Eph.* ii. 2. There is a Spirit indeed that works in them, and a Rule it works by; the Spirit is that evil Spirit, contrary to the Holy Spirit of God, and you may know what Spirit it is that works by the Way it leads Men unto; a broad Way, path'd and trodden in by many Travellers, 'tis the King's high Street, the common Way that most Part walk into, according as their Neighbours do, as the most do. But that King is the Prince of this World, Satan who blinds the Eyes of many, that they may not see that Pit of Misery before them, which their Way leads them to. A Christian must have a kind of Singularity, not in Opinion, but in Practice rather, to be more holy, and walk more abstracted from the Dregs of the World's Pollution, this were a divine Singularity. Indeed Men may suspect themselves, that separates from the Godly in Opinion, they have Reason to be more jealous of themselves, when they offend against the Generation of the just; but if this were the Intention and Design of Men, to be very unlike the Multitude of Men, nay, to be very unlike the Multitude of Professors, in the Affection and Practice of Holiness, Humility and spiritual Walking, I think this were an allowed Way, though a singular Way. Men may aspire to as great a Difference as may be, from the Conversations and Practice of others, if there be a tending to more Conformity to the Word, the Rule of all Practice. *The Law is Spiritual and Holy*, saith *Paul*, *but I am carnal*; this therefore, were spiritual Walking, to set that excellent spiritual Rule before our Eyes, that we who are carnal, may be transformed and changed into more Likeness to that holy and spiritual Law. If a Man had not an imperfect Rule of his own Fancy and Imagination before his Eyes, he could not be satisfied with his Attainments, but with *Paul*, would forget them, in a Manner, not know them, but reach forward still to what is before; because so much length would be before us, as would swallow up all our Progress, this would keep the Motion on Foot, and make it constant: A Man should never say, *Master, let us make Tabernacles, 'tis good to be here*; no indeed, the dwelling Place and resting, would be seen to be above. As long as a Man had so much of his Journey to accomplish, he would not sit down on in his Advancement, he would not compare with others, and exalt himself above others. Why? because there is still a far greater Distance between him and his Rule, than between the slowest Walker and him. This made *Paul* more sensible of a *Body of Death*, *Rom.* vii. than readily lower Christians are. Reflections on our Attainments and Comparisons with others, which are so often the Work of our Spirits, are a retrograde Motion, it makes no Way, but spends the Time, is a returning as we go; whereas we ought to go straight forward. I beseech you, Christians, consider what you are doing, if you would prove your selves so indeed. I know not how you can evidence it better, than by honouring and esteeming his Word and Commandments exceeding large and precious, no End of their Perfection; the Word is much undervalued in the Opinions of many, but it is as little cared for in the Practice of most; there is certainly little of God there, where this is not magnified and

and honoured. There must be Darkness in that Way, where this Candle which was *a Lamp to David's Feet*, shines not. Some promise to us Liberty, but they themselves are the Servants of Corruption; it is no Liberty to be above all Law and Rule. It was innocent *Adam*'s Liberty to be conformed to a holy and just Command, nay, this was his Beauty: The Spirit indeed gives Liberty where he is, but this Liberty is from our Sins and Corruptions, not to them, it looses the Chains of a Man's own corrupt Lusts off him, to walk at Freedom in the Way of his Commandments, the Spirit enlargeth the Prisoner's Heart, and then he runs, but not at random, but *the Way of his Commands*, Psal. cxix. 32. It was our Bondage to be as wild Asses, traversing our Ways, to be gadding abroad, to change our Way Now, here is the Spirit's Liberty, to bring us into the Way, and that Way is one. Let us then learn this one Principle, the Word must be the Rule of your Walking, both common and religious. Alas, 'tis not spiritual Walking, to confine Religion to some solemn Duties: Remember, 'tis a Walk, a continued Thing, without Interruption, therefore your whole Conversation ought to be as so many Steps progressive to Heaven. Your Motion should not be to begin only when you come to pray, or read, or hear, as many Men do, they are in a quite different Way and Element, when they step out of their civil Callings, into religious Ordinances; but Christians, your Motion should be continued in your eating and drinking, and sleeping, and acting in your Callings, that when you come to pray, or read, you may be but stepping forward in the Way, out of one darker obscurer Path, into a more beaten Way. Remember, this Word can make us perfect to Salvation. It is a Principle in the Hearts of Folks, which is vented now by many, that the Word doth not reach their particular Carriages and Conversations, in civil Matters, these are apprehended to be without the Sphere and Compass of the Word; while it is commonly cast up to Ministers, meddle with the Word and spiritual Things, and not with our Matters. Truly I think, if we separate these from the Word, we may quickly separate all Religion from such Actions; and if such Actings and Businesses be without the Court of the Word, they are also without the Court of Conscience; Conscience, Religion and the Word being commensurable. Therefore I beseech every one of you, take the Word for the ruling of your Callings and Conversations among Men, extend it to all your Actions, that in all those you may act as Christians, as well as Men. It is certainly the Licentiousness of the Spirits of Men, that cannot endure the Application of the Word into their particular Actions and Conversations.

Now this spiritual Walk proceeds from spiritual Principles. It is certain, the Spirit of Jesus Christ is he *in whom we live, and move, and have our Being* spiritually, without him we can do nothing; and therefore Christians ought to walk with such a Subordination to, and Dependance on him, as if they were meer Instruments, and Patients under his Hand; though I think in regard of endeavoured Activity, they should bestir themselves, and give all Diligence, as if they acted independantly of the Spirit: Yet in regard of Denial of himself, and Dependance on the Spirit, each one ought to act, as if he did not act at all, but the Spirit only acted in him. This is the Divinity of *Paul*, *I laboured more abundantly than they*

all, yet not I, but Grace in me. I live, yet not I, but Christ in me. O how difficult a Thing is it to reconcile these two in the Practice of Christians, which yet cannot really be, except they be together? It is certainly one of the great Mysteries of Christianity, to draw our Strength and Activity from another, to look upon our selves, and our Actings, as they can do nothing, as empty Vines; and that notwithstanding of all infused and acquired Principles. Whatever we ought to do in judging and discerning of our Condition, yet sure I am, Christians in the Exercise and Practice of Godliness, should look upon themselves void of any Principle in themselves, either to do or think, *not that we are sufficient of our selves*: The proficient and growing Christian, should look no more on his own Inclinations and Habits, than if he had none; he should consider himself an ungodly Man, that no Fruit can grow upon, one that cannot pray, as he is in himself. But alas! we come to Duties, in the Confidence of Qualifications for Duties, acts more confidently in them, because accustomed to them, and so makes Grace and Religion a kind of Art and Discipline, that Use and Experience makes expert into. Learn now this one Thing, which would be instead of many Rules and Doctrines to us, to shut out of your Eyes the Consideration of what you are by Gifts or Grace, or Experience: Do not consider that, but rather fix your Eyes on the Grace of Jesus Christ, and upon the Power and Vertue of the Holy Spirit which is given by Promise; that when the Way is all the easiest to you, both by Delight and Custom, yet you may find it to your natural Principles as insuperable, as at the Beginning; and may still cry, *Draw me, and I will run after thee; lead me, and I will walk with thee.* Do not measure the Call into Duties, by the Strenth thou finds in thy self, but look unto him who strengtheneth us with all Might. Now the Spirit worketh in us by subordinate spiritual Principles, as believing in Christ, and loving of him, as our Lord and Saviour; and these two Acts drives on a Soul sweetly in the Way of Obedience. Fear, where not mixt in its Actings with Faith and Love, is a Spirit of Bondage: but the Christian ought to walk according to the Spirit of Adoption, which crys, *Abba, Father.* Yet how many Christians are rather in a servile and slavish Manner driven on by Terrors and Chastisements to their Duty, than by Love: There is a Piece of Liberty in Christian Walking, when there is not a Restraint upon the Spirit, by this slavish Fear; this, I say, is not beseeming these that are in Christ Jesus; you ought to have the Spirit of your Father for your Leader and Guide. O! how sweet, and how certain and necessary also, would this Walking be? The Love of Christ would be an inward Principle of Motion, and would make our spiritual Actings as easy and pleasant, as natural Motions are. Fear is but a violent Principle, that is like the Impulse of a Stone thrown upward; as long as that external Impression remains, it moves, but still slower and slower, and at length evanisheth: But if you believed in him, and your Hearts were engaged to love him, O! how would it be a pleasant and native Thing to walk in his Way, as a Stone goeth downward. Consider your Principles, that acts you to Matters and Duties of Religion: Many Men there be, in whom appears no Difference of their Work to Beholders; but, O! how wide a Difference doth God discern in them? Engines and Artifice may make dead and lifeless Things move and walk as orderly

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as Things that have Life." But the Principle of this Motion, makes a huge Difference; the one is moved from without, the other from it self. The most part of us act as irrational and brute Beasts in Religion; nay, we walk as inanimate and senseless Creatures: 'Tis some one or other Consideration without us, moves us, Custom, Censure, Education, and such like: Ah! these are the Principles of our Religion. How many would have no Religion, no Form of it, if they were not among such Company? And therefore we see many change it, according to Companies, as the Fish doth its Skin, according to the Colour of that which is nearest it. How many would do many Things they dare not for Punishment and Censure, and for that same dare not leave other Things undone? In a Word, the most part of us are such as would walk in no Path of Godliness, if it were not the Custom of the Time, and Fear of Men that constrained us. But, my Brethren, let it not be so among you, you *who are in Christ Jesus*; let this be the Predominant in your Hearts to constrain you, not to live to your selves, but unto God, even this, that you believe, *Christ hath died for Sinners, that they might live from Sin*; and from this let your Hearts be inflamed with his Love, that it may carry you on in a sweet and blessed Necessity to walk in all well-pleasing: Let the Consideration of his Love lay on a Constraint, but a Constraint of Willingness, to live to him who hath thus loved you. But as the Principle is spiritual, so must the End be; and I think these two compleat the Mystery of the Practice of Christianity, to act from another Principle unto another End; even as these two make up the Mystery of Iniquity in our Hearts, to act from our selves, unto our selves; every Man naturally makes a god of himself, is his own *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning of his Actions, and the End of them, which is proper to God. As the Fall hath cut of the Subordination of the Soul to God in its Actions, that it cannot now derive all from that blessed Fountain of All-being and Well-being, so is this Channel of Reference of all our Actions to God stopped, that they do not tend unto him, as they are not derived from him; and thus they return unto a Man's self again. There is one Point of *self*, and making it our Aim and Design, which possibly many doth not take heed unto. It is ordinary for us to act and walk in Christian Duties, for our Salvation, for obtaining of Life Eternal, as our chief and only End, which is but an inferior End; because we ought not to walk mainly for Life, but to Life; we should not walk after the Command only for Heaven, but in the Way of it unto Heaven. Our spiritual Walking can never purchase us right unto the least of his Mercies; when we have done all, this should be our Soul's Language, *We are unprofitable Servants*, our *Righteousness extends not to thee. What Gain is it to the Almighty that thou art righteous*? Yet for the most part, we make our Walking as a Hire for the Reward. The Covenant of Works, doing for Life, is some Way naturally imprinted in our Hearts, and we cannot do, but we would live in doing; we cannot walk unto all well-pleasing, but we would also walk unto pacifying of God. Self-righteousness is Men's great Idol, which when all other baser and grosser Idols are down, they do still seek to establish. But Christians, observe this Evil in your selves, and suffer this Mystery of Godliness to be wrought in you, the abasing of your selves, the Denial of your selves. I would have

you, in respect of Diligence and Earnestness, doing, walking, and running, as if ye were to be saved by it only: But again, you must deny all that, and no more consider it, or lean weight upon it, than if ye ought to do nothing, or did nothing. But your Ends should be more divine and high, as your Nature is, *to glorifie God in your mortal Bodies, since ye are his, and bought with a Price.* O how ought ye not to be your own? The great Purpose of your Obedience should be, a Declaration of your Sense of his Love, and of your Obligation to him: Ye ought to walk in his Way, because ye are escaped Condemnation, and saved by him, and not that ye may be saved only. It is the Glory of our Heavenly Father, and the Honour of the Redeemer, for Christians to walk, even as he walked, and follow his Footsteps; it commends the Grace of Jesus Christ exceedingly. Therefore this cannot but be the Choise and Delight of a believing Soul, to walk unto all well-pleasing, to have the Glory of him as their great Design to aim at; who for our Salvation laid aside his Glory, and embraced Shame and Reproach. We use to walk in Obedience to God, that we may pacifie God for our Disobedience: But let a Christian abhor such a Thought, Christ's Blood must pacifie, but the walking of his Child pleaseth him in his wel-beloved Son. When he is once pacified for Sin, when he once accepts your Persons, your Performances are his Delight: Now this should be the great Scope of a Soul, that all its Powers should be fixed on, to please him, and live to him.

Now these three being established, we must conceive that the chief Agent and Party in this walking must be spiritual; therefore Mens Bodies are not capable of this Walk after the Spirit principally. Outward Ordinances are but the Shell wherein the Kirnel must be inclosed; all our walkings that is visible to Men, is but like a painted or engraven Image and Statue, that hath no Breath or Life in it, unless the Spirit actuate and quicken the same. I say not only the Spirit of God, but the Spirit and Soul in Man; for the Spirit's immediate and divine Operations are upon such a suitable Subject, as the immortal Soul. *Verily, there is a Spirit in Man, and the Inspiration of the Almigbty gives him Understanding:* We must not abolish the outward Form, because it hath some Divinity in it, even the Stamp of God's Authority; and therefore, these who are swelled above Ordinances, I fear they be monstrous Christians. A Man is composed of a Spirit and a Body, acted and quickned by that Spirit, without either of these, he is not a complete man: So I say, he is not a Christian, that doth not worship God in the Spirit, and in Truth both; and it is not Religion that excludes either the inward Soul-communion with God, or the outward Ordinance and Appointment of God. But alas, this may be our Complaint, we come and worship God, and *draws nigh with our Bodies, but our Hearts are far removed.* Here is the Death of many's Worship, the Soul is separated from the Body of it, these are but Pictures and Images of Christians; we have Mouths and Faces of Saints, but O! how little of divine Affection, or of Soul-desires, breathes in us? We are Deniers of the *Power of Godliness*, by resting in a Form, and this is the great Sin of this Generation, the Essentials, the vital Spirits of Christianty, are exhausted, and some dry Bones, like an Anatomy of a Christian, remains behind. I beseech you, gather your Spirits to this spiritual Walking, they only can follow the Spirit, your Bodies

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are earthly and lumpiſh, and the Way is all upward to the *Holy Hill*. Look inwardly and meaſure your ſelves ſo, outward Appearance is no juſt Meaſure; retire within your Souls, and engage them in this Exerciſe, and enter them to this Motion, and your Spirits will ſweetly and ſurely act your Bodies and Externals, in all Matters of Godlineſs.

SERMON VI.

Verſ. 1. *Who walk not after the Fleſh*, &c.

IT is one of the greateſt Myſteries in a Chriſtian's Practice, to join theſe two together, which the Goſpel hath conjoined, Juſtification and Sanctification, and to place them in their due Order: There is much Miſcarrying in both theſe, if either they are ſeparated, or miſplaced: But, the Truth is, they cannot really be, except they be jointly; yet, often it falls out, that in Mens Apprehenſions and Endeavours, they are disjoined: This then were the Argument of a living, and believing Chriſtian, to join the Study of Holineſs, with the Exerciſe of Faith in Chriſt, for Remiſſion of Sin, and Righteouſneſs; and not only to join it, but alſo, to derive it from that Principle: There is both an Union between theſe, and an Order eſtabliſhed in Scripture. The moſt Part of theſe that profeſs the Goſpel, are of two Sorts; they do either divide Holineſs from imputed Righteouſneſs, or Chriſt's Righteouſneſs from Holineſs: I do not ſay, that any Man truly ſeeks to be covered with the Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and to have his Sins freely pardoned, but he will alſo ſtudy to walk before God, in all well-pleaſing; but the Truth is, many do pretend, and profeſs to ſeek Salvation, and Forgiveneſs in Chriſt's Blood, and have the Mercy of God, and Merits of Chriſt, always in their Mouth, who yet declare by their Converſation, that they do not ſo much as deſire, or purpoſe to ſeek after Holineſs: I do not ſpeak of theſe who are *Antinomians* in profeſſion, but of a great Multitude in the viſible Church, who are more really *Antinomians*, to wit, in Practice, than moſt Part of profeſſed *Antinomians*. You hear all, of free Grace, and free Redemption in Jeſus Chriſt, of tender and enduring Mercies in God, and this you take for the whole Goſpel; and preſently upon the Notion of Mercy and Grace, you conclude unto your ſelves, not only Immunity and Freedom from all the Threatnings of the Word, and from Hell, but likewiſe ye proclaim ſecretly in your own Hearts, a Liberty to ſin ſo much the more ſecurely; the Door of Mercy caſt open in the Goſpel, and the free Acceſs to Chriſt, manifeſted therein, through the Corruption that is within us, proves the very Occaſion of many's giving Indulgence to their Luſts; of delaying Reformation, and turning to God. You all profeſs, that you ſeek to be juſtified, and ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt; yea, you perſwade your ſelves, to be eſcaped Condemnation, by Chriſt: Now then, con-

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joyn that Profeſſion and Perſwaſion, with your Walk, and O! how contrary you may find them to one another? Your Faith is vain, *for ye are yet in your Sins*, Tit. ii. 11, 12. *The Grace of God appearing to ſome Men* effectually, *teacheth them to deny Ungodlineſs, and worldly Luſts, and to live righteouſly, ſoberly, and godly*, &c. But if we may conjecture your teaching by your walking, it ſeems the Notion of Grace and the Goſpel that is formed in your Minds, hath taught you another Doctrine, to avow *Ungodlineſs*, and follow *worldly Luſts*. Is there ſo much as a Shadow of this ſpiritual Walking in many? I confeſs, it is natural for every Man to ſeek his own Righteouſneſs; and it is the Arm of God that muſt bow Men, to ſubmit to Chriſt's imputed Righteouſneſs; yet, the moſt Part of Men, ſeem to be ſo far from ſeeking any Righteouſneſs, that they are rather ſeeking the fulfilling of their own carnal Luſts, *working Wickedneſs with Greedineſs*, not caring how little they have to put Confidence into; and yet, certain it is, that how much ſoever a Man attains to, of a Form of Religion, or civil Honeſty, he is ready to put his Truſt in it, and to lean the Weight of his Soul upon it: But ſeeing this is natural to you all, to ſeek Heaven by doing and working, I wonder that ye do no more; How do ye ſatisfy your Confidences in the Expectation of Heaven, who take ſo little Pains in Religion, and are ſo looſe and profane in your Converſation? I wonder, ſeeing ye have it naturally engraven in your Hearts, to eſtabliſh your own Righteouſneſs, that ye labour not to have more of it to fill your Eye withall.

But again, on the other Hand, there are ſome Men, who have a Form of Religion, and labour to be of a blameleſs Converſation among Men, that poſſibly perſwades themſelves, they are ſeeking Holineſs, and walking ſpiritually; but alas, you may find it but a painted and ſeeming Religion, that is an Abomination in the Sight of God; becauſe it is to them, all the Ground of their Acceptation before God. If ever this Queſtion was moved in ſome of you, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* You have condeſcended on ſuch a Walk, ſuch a Profeſſion, for the Anſwer of it; It is natural to all, even theſe who have leaſt Appearance of Godlineſs, to ſeek Heaven, by doing God's Will; theſe that have no more to ſpeak of, than their Baptiſm, or receiving the Lord's Supper, or attending well the ſolemn Aſſemblies, will ground their Hope of Salvation on thoſe Things: How much more, will the civil and honeſt Men (commonly ſo called) who pray and read, and profeſs Godlineſs, how much more, I ſay, will they eſtabliſh that which they attain to, as the Ground of their Confidence before God? Now, this is a general, unknown Ill that deſtroys the World, and yet few are convinced of it, how hard it is to be driven out of our ſelves, and to ſeek Life in another. O! know, that it is in a Manner, the crucifying of a Man's ſelf, thus to deny himſelf, to have a Sort of Righteouſneſs, and not to truſt in it. Who is he, that cannot indure to look upon himſelf, for moral Vileneſs? Alas, Men flatter themſelves in their own Eyes, look with a more favourable Eye on their own Actions, than they ought: Who is he that abhors himſelf, even for abominable Works? But who ſhall be found to abhor himſelf, for his moſt Religious and beſt Actions? Who caſts theſe out of their Sight, as unclean and menſtruous Things? Therefore, I ſay, though thy Righteouſneſs were equal to, or exceeded any *Phariſee*'s Righteouſneſs,

neſs, thou cannot enter into Heaven: The poor *Publican*, that was a vile and profane Sinner, yet his Righteouſneſs exceeding the *Phariſee's*; though he had none of his own, yet he had a Righteouſneſs without Blemiſh, of Chriſt's purchaſing, having by Faith fled to the Mercy of God, in, and through a Mediator. It is not more doing, more praying, more exact walking, that can make you more righteous in God's Account, in order to Abſolution from Law-condemnation, than the profaneſt and moſt wretched Sinner; but the baſer and viler thou be in then own Eyes, the more thou hide thy beſt Doings from thine Eyes, and look on thy Uncleanneſs, and betakes thy ſelf to Chriſt, his unſpotted and perfect Righteouſneſs; the more honourable and precious thou art in his Eyes. Therefore, God is ſaid to dwell in the Heart of the humble and contrite one, not for the worth of his Humility, and Repentance; No, no, but for the Pleaſure he hath in the Well-beloved's Righteouſneſs, that is the beautiful Garment, only in the Eye of a humbled Soul, that ſeeth nothing in it ſelf deſirable.

Therefore, I wiſh, that this Conjunction which is made in the Goſpel, were alſo engraven in your Hearts, and on your Practices, that is, that you would *ſeek after Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee God*; ſeek to perfect it in the Fear of God, but not as though ye were to be thereby juſtified; ſeek it with that Diligence and earneſt Study, as if ye were to be ſaved by it, and yet ſeek it, ſo as to be denyed to your Diligence, or as if ye ſought it not at all. How ſweet a Conjunction were this in the Chriſtians Practice, to walk and run ſo after the Prize, as if his walking did obtain it, and yet to look upon his walking, as if it were not at all. Your Diligence and Seriouſneſs in Godlineſs ſhould be upon the growing Hand, as if doing did ſave you; yet you ought to deny all that, and look to the Righteouſneſs of another, as if nothing were done at all by you. How doth *Paul*, Phil. iii. 8. unite theſe in his Practice, *I count all Loſs and Dung, to be found in Chriſt, not having my own Righteouſneſs*, and *yet I preſs forward*, and follow after Perfection, as having attained nothing yet. One of theſe two is the Original of many Stumblings and Wandrings in our Chriſtian-way, either there is not a Neceſſity and Conſtraint laid upon the Souls of many to walk in all well-pleaſing, and to *perfect Holineſs in the Fear of God*: We look on it as a Thing indifferent, that is to be determined according to the Meaſure of our Receivings from God, or we look on it as a Thing not urging all, but belonging to Miniſters, or more eminent Profeſſors, and hence there ariſeth much carnal Liberty, in walking without the Line of Chriſtian-liberty, becauſe there is an Indifference in the Spirit that gives that Latitude in walking; or elſe there is not that following of Holineſs in ſuch a Way, as can conſiſt with the eſtabliſhing of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs. No Dehial of our ſelves, in our Actions, we act as if we were ſufficient of our ſelves, and walks as if we were thereby juſtified, and commends our ſelves to God in our own Conſciences, when ever we can have the Teſtimony of our Conſciences, for well-doing. And by this Means, the Lord is provoked; becauſe we do not honour the Son the Father counts himſelf deſpiſed, and the Spirit is grieved and tempted to depart, and leave us to our own Imaginations, till our Idol which we eſtabliſhed, fall down, and our Underſtanding return to us.

As it would be of great Moment to the Peace of Christians, and Increase of Holiness, to have that Union of Justification and Sanctification stamped on their Hearts, so especially to have the due and evangelick Method and Order of these impressed on their Consciences, it would conduce exceedingly, both to their quickening and comforting: As there is nothing, that either so deadens or darkens, and saddens the Spirits of the Godly, as Darkness in this particular, the Ignorance and Mistake of the Method and Order of that well-ordered Covenant must certainly be very prejudicial to the Life and Consolation tendered by the Gospel. This spiritual Walking, it flows from the Believers state of Non-condemnation in Christ; he is once in Jesus Christ, and then he walks after the Spirit of Christ. You may make Engines to cause a dead Statute walk, but it cannot walk of self, till it have a Principle of Life in it. Walking is one of the Operations of Life, that flows from some inward Principle, and so this spiritual Walk and Motion of a Christian in his Course, is the proper Operation of the new Nature that he is a Partaker of in Christ Jesus. As then you know it is impossible that there can be true and unfeigned Walking, where there is no Life, no Principle within to put the Creature to Motion, though a Man may by Art, and some external Impulse, so act a Piece of Timber or Stone, as it may resemble to you a Walking like to living Creatures, so it is not possible, that any of the Sons of *Adam*, who are by Nature *dead in Sins*, can walk spiritually, before they be united to Jesus Christ, by believing in him, for Righteousness and Salvation: There may be such a Walking of carnal unregenerate Men, as may deceive all the Senses and Judgments of Beholders: Men may be acted from base external Principles, in Matters of Religion, so that a Beholder shall perceive no Difference beteween them and others, in whom Christ lives and walks; but before God it is nothing else, but an artificial Walk, a painted and dead Business, because, *the Spirit that raised up Christ*, is not stirring in them, they are not living Members of that Head that quickens all, have not been driven out of their own Righteousness, to Christ, the City of Refuge; their Principles are no higher then walking to obtain Salvation, and Acceptation of God in a legal Way, walking to pacifie him, walking to please Men and their own Consciences, walking for Gain or Credit, or Advantage in the Way, walking according to Custom or Education in the Way. These are not living Principles; but when once a Soul hath embraced Christ Jesus within it, he becomes in a manner, a Soul to actuate and to quicken that Soul, he animates it, and moves it in God's Ways, according to the Covenant of Grace, *I will put my Spirit in you, and cause you walk in my Ways*; there is first quickning, and then walking. *You who were dead in Sins, hath he quickned together with Christ*, Eph. ii. 1, 5. and then it follows in due Order, *I will cause you to walk in my Ways*, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Christ comes into the Heart to dwell, and then he walks in it; 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. And what is that, Christ to walk in Believers? it is nothing else, but Christ by his Spirit making them to walk in his Way; there is so little in us to principle a spiritual Action, even when renewed and quickned, that we should look on our selves not so much, as Workers with him, but as being acted by him; we should look on Soul and Body, as Pieces of organized Clay, that cannot move, but as

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it is moved by him as the Soul and Life of it; ſo that according to the Scripture Dialect, a Chriſtian is nothing elſe, but Chriſt living and walking in ſuch a Perſon. This is it which Chriſt when he is to go out of the World inſtructs his Diſciples into, *John* xv. 1. *He is the Vine, and we the Branches*; the Branch muſt firſt be united to the Tree, and implanted into the Tree, ere it bring forth Fruit, without the Tree, it withers: So muſt a Soul be firſt ingraft in Jeſus Chriſt, implanted in him by Faith in his Death and Sufferings, before it can grow up into *the Similitude of his Reſurrection*, or *walk in Newneſs of Life*, as *Paul* ſpeaks, *Rom.* vi. 4, 5. *Without me ye can do nothing*; ye muſt firſt be one with him, by believing in him, and receiving him as a compleat Saviour, and then the Sap and Vertue of the Tree flows into the dead Branch, and it ſhoots forth, and bloſſoms and bears.

Now if this Doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles were duly pondered and believed, O what a Change would it make on the Lives and Spirits of Chriſtians? Since this is the Order eſtabliſhed in the Goſpel, and an Order ſuitable both to his Grace and our Neceſſity, (as all that is in it ſpeaketh forth an excellent Contriver) when we go about to eſtabliſh our Souls in another Method, how is it poſſible that we ſhould not weary and vex our Souls in vain? How can we chooſe but torment our ſelves, and intricate our ſelves ſtill more? Our Method and Way is juſt contrary, we perplex our Souls how to find the Fruits of the Spirit of Chriſt, how to walk after the Spirit, without firſt cloſing intirely with Chriſt himſelf. We trouble our ſelves to find the Operations of a ſpiritual Life, before we lay hold on Chriſt, who is the Life of our Souls. It is made an Argument by many, to keep them from believing in Chriſt, becauſe they do not find that ſpiritual Life ſtirring in them. How croſs is this to the declared Mind of Chriſt in the Goſpel? It cannot chooſe but both darken the Spirit more, and dry up the Influences of the Spirit of God, becauſe it keeps thee from the Fountain of all Conſolation. You may diſquiet your Souls by this Means, but you ſhall never make Advantage this Way, without him *ye can do nothing*: And yet ye will not come to him, becauſe you have done nothing. 'Tis ſtrange how little Reaſon is in it, if your Eyes were opened; you refuſe or delay to abide in the Vine, till you bring forth Fruit, and Fruit you cannot bring forth, till you be in the Vine: You would walk, and you will not have the Life from which you muſt walk. *Paul* lived indeed, but what a Life? *The Life that I live is by the Faith of the Son of God*; Faith in Chriſt tranſported him out of himſelf to Chriſt, or received Chriſt into the Soul, and Chriſt in the Soul, was the Life of his Soul, *Gal.* ii. 20. Your walking is as if a dead Man would eſſay to go. *Will one expect Figs of Thorns, or Grapes of Thiſtles?* I beſeech you, know what wrong ye do to your ſelves, and to Chriſt; ye wrong your ſelves, becauſe ye ſtand in the Way of your own Mercy, ye ſtand aback from your Life, him that is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*. You would walk in the Way, but no Man can walk in this Way, but by this Way; Chriſt muſt quicken you to walk in himſelf, ye muſt get Life in him, and not bring it. You are in a vain Expectation of Fruits from your ſelves, they will never ſee the Sun, and when you have wearyed your ſelf in ſuch a vain Purſuit, you muſt at length come and begin here. Ye wrong Chriſt his Grace and Mercy, this

Order is ſuited of Purpoſe for our deſperate Condition, and yet ye preſume to reject it, and ſeek another. You preſcribe to your skilful and tender Phyſician, that which would undo you: I beſeech you, know the Original of your Miſeries, Doubts, Barrenneſs, and Darkneſs: Here it is, you are ſtill puzling your ſelves about Grace and Duties, how to fill your Eyes with theſe, and ye neglect Chriſt as your Righteouſneſs, as one dead and riſen again, and now ſitting at God's right Hand for us, you muſt firſt cloſe with him, as ungodly Men, though you were godly, you muſt ſhut your Eyes on any ſuch Thing, and lay living Jeſus upon your dead and benumb'd Hearts, anſwer all your Challenges with his Abſolution, and ſtand before God, in his cloathing, put his Garment immediately on your Nakedneſs and Vileneſs; and we may perſwade you, it ſhall yield you abundant Conſolation and Life, *becauſe he lives, ye ſhall live*, and walk. If you were more frequent and ſerious in the Conſideration of his excellent Majeſty, of his beautiful and lovely Qualifications, as the Mediator for Sinners, and of the precious Promiſes, which are all, *Yea, and Amen*, confirmed in him, and leſs in the vain and unprofitable Debates of Self-intereſt, and ſuch like, I am perſwaded ye would be more fruitful Chriſtians. This is not as the Buſineſs of a Holy-day, to be done at your firſt coming to Chriſt, and no more; no, it muſt run alongſt all your Life, the aged experienced Chriſtian muſt come alongs as an ungodly Sinner, to a bleſſed and living Saviour, and have no other Ground of Glory or Confidence before God, but Chriſt Jeſus crucified.

SERMON VII.

Verſ. 2. *For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Jeſus Chriſt, hath made me free, from the Law of Sin and Death.*

YOU know there are two principal Things in the preceeding Verſe, the Privilege of a Chriſtian, and the Property or Character of a Chriſtian; he is one that never enters into Condemnation, *He that believeth ſhall not periſh*, Joh. iii. 15. And then he is one, *that walks not after the Fleſh*, though *he be in the Fleſh*, but in a more elevate Way above Men, after the guiding and leading of the Holy Spirit of God. Now it may be objected in many Conſciences, how can theſe Things be? Have not all ſinned, and come ſhort of the Glory of God, and ſo the whole World is become Guilty before God? Is not every Man lying under a Sentence of Death? *Curſed is he that abides not in all Things*, &c. How then can he eſcape Condemnation? Again, you ſpeak of walking after the Spirit, as proper to the Chriſtian; but whoſe Walk is not Carnal? Who is it that doth not often ſtep aſide out of the Way, and follow the Conduct and Counſel of Fleſh and Blood?

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Is not Sin dwelling here in our mortal Bodies? Who can ſay, *My Heart or Way is clean*? Therefore both that Privilege and this Property of a Chriſtian, ſeems to be but big Words, no real Thing. And indeed I confeſs the Multitude of Men hath no other Opinion of them, but as fancied imaginary Things; few believes the Report of the Goſpel concerning the Salvation of elect ones, and few underſtands what this ſpiritual Walking is; many conceive it is not a Thing that belongs to Men, who are led about with Paſſions and Affections, but rather to Angels or Spirits perfected.

However, we have in theſe Words an Anſwer to ſatisfie both Objections: He grants ſomething implicitely, and it is this. It is true indeed, Chriſtians are under a twofold Law, Captives and Bondmen to theſe; *A Law of Sin in their Members, bringing them in Subjection to the Luſts of the Fleſh.* Sin hath a powerful Dominion and Tyranny over every Man by Nature, it hath a Sort of Right and Power over him; and likewiſe, every one was under a Law of Death, the Law of God curſing him, and ſentencing him to Condemnation becauſe of Sin; theſe two were joint Conquerors of all Mankind. But, ſaith he, there is a Delivery from this Bondage, Freedom is obtained to Believers by Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo *there is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt*, and ſo they walk not after the Leading and Direction of that Law of Sin within them, but after the guiding of our bleſſed Tutor, the Spirit of God. If you ask how this comes to paſs, by what Authority, or Law, or Power is this Releaſement and Freedom obtained? Here it is, *By the Law of the Spirit of Life, which is in Chriſt.* Chriſt is not an Invader, or unjuſt Conqueror, he hath fair Law for what he doth, even againſt theſe Laws which detains Unbelievers in Bondage: There is a higher and later Law on his Side, and he hath Power and Strength to accompliſh his Deſign. He oppoſes Law unto Law, and Life unto Death, and Spirit unto Fleſh; a Law of Spirit, unto a Law of Sin and Fleſh; a Law of Life, unto a Law of Death. In a Word, the Goſpel, or Covenant of Grace, unto the Law, or Covenant of Works; the powerful and living Spirit of Grace that wrought mightily in him, is ſet foreagainſt the Power of Sin and Satan in us, and againſt us; the one gives him Right and Title to conquer, the other accompliſheth him for the Work; and by theſe two, are Believers in Jeſus Chriſt made Free-men, who were Bond-men. That then which we would ſpeak from theſe Words, is the common Lot of all Men by Nature, *viz.* to be under the Power of Sin, and Sentence of Death; the ſpecial Exemption of Believers in Chriſt, and Immunity from this, or Delivery from it, and then the true Ground and Cauſe of this Delivery from that Bondage; which three are contained in the Words. It is a Purpoſe indeed of a high Nature, and of high Concernment to us all, our Life and Death is wrapt up in this; you may hear many Things more gladly, but if ye knew it, none ſo profitable. Therefore let us gather our Spirits to the Conſideration of theſe Particulars.

As to the firſt, all Men are under the Bondage of a twofold Law, *The Law of Sin within them*, and the Law of Death *without them. Man was created righteous*, but, ſaith the wiſe Man, *he found out many Inventions*; a ſad Invention indeed, he found out Miſery and Slavery to himſelf, who was made free and happy. His Freedom and Happineſs was to be in

Subjection to his Maker, under the juſt and holy Commands of his Lord, who had given him Breath and Being; It was no Captivity or Reſtraint, to be compaſſed about with the Hedges of the Lord's holy Law, no more than it is a Reſtraint on a Man's Liberty, to have his Way hedged in, where he may ſafely walk, that he may keep himſelf within it, from Pits and Snares on every Hand. But, alas! (if we may ſay, alas! when we have ſuch a Redemption in Jeſus Chriſt) *Adam* was not content with that Happineſs, but ſeeking after more Liberty, he *ſold himſelf into the Hands of ſtrange Lords*, firſt Sin, and then Death. *Other Lords beſides thee, O Lord, have Dominion over us*, Iſa. xxvi. 13. This is too true in this Senſe, *Adam* ſeeking to be as the Lord himſelf, loſt his own Lordſhip and Dominion over all the Works of God's Hands, and became a Servant to the baſeſt and moſt abominable of all, even that which is moſt hateful to the Lord, to Sin and Death. And this is the Condition we are now born into. Conſider it, I pray you, we are born Captives and Slaves, the moſt noble, the moſt ingenuous, and the moſt free of us all: *Paul* ſpeaks of it as a Privilege, to be born free, to be free in Man's Common-wealth. It is counted a Dignity to be a free Citizen or Burgeſs of a Town: Liberty is the great Claim of People now a Days, and indeed it is the great Advantage of a People to enjoy that Mother, and Womb-privilege and Right. But, alas! what is all this to be free born in a civil Society? It is but the State of a Man among Men, it reaches no further than the outward Man, his Life or Eſtate. But here is a Matter of greater Moment, know you what State your Souls are in? Your Souls are incomparably more worth than your Bodes, as much as Eternity ſurpaſſeth this Inch of Time, or Immortality exceeds Mortality; your Souls are your ſelves indeed, your Bodies are but your Houſe or Tabernacle you lodge into for a Seaſon: Now then, I beſeech you, ask whether you be born free or not; if your Souls be ſlaves, you are Slaves indeed, for ſo the Evangeliſt changeth theſe; *Matthew* ſaith, in *ch.* xvi. 26. *What hath a Man gained, if he loſe his Soul?* And, *Luke* ix. 25. ſaith, *What hath he gained, if he loſe himſelf?* Therefore you are not free indeed, except your Souls be free: What is it, I pray you, to enjoy Freedom among Men? I ask you, what are you before God, whether bond or free? this is the Buſineſs indeed. The Phariſees pleaded a Claim to the Liberty and Privilege of being *Abraham*'s Sons and Children; and thought, they might hence conclude they were God's Children. But our Lord Jeſus diſcovers this Miſtake, when he tells them of a Freedom and Liberty that he came to proclaim to Men, to purchaſe to them, and beſtow on them; they ſtumbled at this Doctrine: What, ſay they, talkeſt thou to us of making us free, *We were never in Bondage, for we be Abraham's Children?* This is even the Language of our Hearts, when we tell you, that ye are born Heirs of Wrath, and Slaves of Sin and Satan, here is the ſecret Whiſpering of Hearts, we be *Abraham*'s Seed, we were never in Bondage to any. We be baptized Chriſtians, we have a Church State, have the Privileges, and Liberties, not only of Subjects in the State, but of Members in the Church; why ſayeſt thou, we are bond-men? I would wiſh ye were all free indeed, but that cannot be till ye know your Bondage. Conſider then, I beſeech you that you may be free Subjects

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in a State, and free Members in a Church, and yet in Bondage, under the Law of Sin and Death. This was the Miſtake, tha was a Ground of Preſumption in the *Jews*, and occaſioned their ſtumbling at this Stone of Salvation, laid in *Sion*; you think you have Church-privilege, and what needs more? Be not deceived, you are Servants of Sin, and therefore not free. There are two Sorts, or rather two Ranks of Perſons, in God's Houſe, Sons and Slaves; the Son abides in the Houſe for ever, the Slave but for a Time; when the Time expires, he muſt go out, or be caſt out. The Church is God's Houſe, but many are in it, that will not dwell in it, many have the outward Liberties of this Houſe, that have no Intereſt in the ſpecial Mercies and loving Kindneſs proper to Children. The Time will come, that the moſt Part of the viſible Church, who are baptized, and have eaten with him at his Table, and had a kind of Friendſhip to him here, ſhall be caſt out as bond Men, and *Iſaac* only ſhall be kept within, the Child of the Promiſe. The Houſe that is here, hath ſome inward Sanctuary, and ſome outter Porches; many have Acceſs to theſe, that never enters within the ſecret of the Lord, and ſo ſhall not dwell in the Houſe above: It is not ſo much the Buſineſs, *who ſhall enter into the holy Hill*, but who ſhall ſtand and dwell in it. The Day of Judgment will be a great Day of Excommunication; O how many thouſands will be then cut off from the Church of the living God, and delivered over to Satan, becauſe they were really under his Power, while they were Church members and *Abraham's* Sons? Let me tell you then, that all of us were once in this State of Bondage, which Chriſt ſpeaks of, *He that commiteth Sin, is the Servant of Sin*, John viii. 34. *and the Servant abides not in the Houſe for ever*: So that I am afraid, many of us who are in the viſible Church, and ſtand in this Congregation, ſhall not have Liberty to ſtand in the Aſſembly of the firſt-born, when all the Sons are gathered in one to the new *Jeruſalem*; Sin hath a Right over us, and it hath a Power over us, and therefore it is called a *Law of Sin*, there is a kind of Authority that it hath over us, by vertue of God's Juſtice, and our own voluntary Conſent. The Lord in his Righteouſneſs hath given over all the Poſterity of *Adam*, for his Sin, which he ſinned, as a common Perſon, repreſenting us, he hath given us all over to the Power of a Body of Death within us. Since Man did chooſe to depart from his Lord, he hath juſtly delivered him into the Hands of a ſtrange Lord to have Dominion over him. Tranſmitting of ſuch an original Pollution, to all Men, is an act of glorious Juſtice. As he in Juſtice gives Men over to the Luſts of their own Hearts now, for following of theſe Luſts contrary to his Will; ſo was it at firſt, *by one Man's Diſobedience many were made Sinners*; and that in God's holy Righteouſneſs, Sin entred into the World, and had Permiſſion of God, to ſubdue and conquer the World, to it ſelf, becauſe Man would not be ſubject to God. But as there is the Juſtice of God in it, ſo there is a voluntary Choice and Election, which gives Sin a Power over us; we chooſe a ſtrange Lord, and he lords it over us: We ſay to our Luſts, Come ye and rule over us, we ſubmit our Reaſon, our Conſcience and all, to the Guidance and leading of our blind Affections, and Paſſions; we chooſe our Bondadge for Liberty; and thus Sin hath a kind of Law over us, by our own Conſent; it exerciſeth a Juriſdiction;

diction; and when once it is installed in Power, and clothed with it, it is not so easie again, to put it out of that Throne: There is a conspiring (so to speak) of these two, to make out the Jurisdiction and Authority of Sin over us. God gives us over to Iniquity and Unrighteousness, and we yield our selves over to it, *Rom.* vi. 16, 19. *we yield our Members Servants to Iniquity*; a little Pleasure or Commodity, is the Bait that ensnares us to this, we give up our selves, and join to our Idols, and God ratifies it, in a manner, and passeth such a Sentence. *Let them alone*, he says, *go ye every one and serve your Idols*, Ezek. xxiii. Since ye would not serve me, be doing, go serve your Lusts, look if they be better Masters than I; look what Wages they will give you.

Now, let us again consider what Power Sin hath, being thus cloathed with a sort of Authority. O! but it is mighty, and works mightily in Men. It reigns in our mortal Bodies, *Rom.* vi. 12. Here is the Throne of Sin established, in the Lusts and Affections of the Body, and from hence it emits Laws and Statutes, and sends out Commands to the Soul, and whole Man. Man choose at first, to hearken to the Counsel of his Senses, that said, it was pleasant and good, to eat of the forbidden Fruit; but that Counsel is now turned into a Command. Sin hath gotten a Scepter there, to rule over the Spirit which was born a free Prince; Sin hath conquered all our Strength, or, we have given up into it all our Strength; any Truth that is in the Conscience, any Knowledge of God, or Religion, all this is incarcerated, detained in Prison of unrighteous Affections: Sin hath many strong Holds and Bulwarks in our Flesh, and by these, commands the whole Spirit and Soul in Man, and leads captive every Thought to the Obedience of the Flesh. You know how strong it was in holy *Paul*, Rom. vii. what a mighty Battle and Wrestling he had, and how near he was to fainting and giving over: How then must it have an absolute, and soveraign, full Dominion over Men in Nature, there being no contrary Principle within by Nature to debate with it, it rules without much Controlment; there may be many Convictions of Conscience, and Sparkles of Light against Sin, but these are quickly extinguished and buried: Nay, all these Principles of Light, and Knowledge in the Conscience, do oftentimes strengthen Sin, as some Things are confirmed, not weakned by Opposition; unequal and faint Opposition strengthens the Adversary, as cold, compassing Springs, makes them hotter: So it is here, Sin takes Occasion by the Command, *to work all manner of Concupiscence*, Rom. vii. 8. Without the Law, Sin is in a manner dead, but when any Adversary appears, when our Lusts and Humors are crossed, then they unite their Strength against any such Opposition, and brings forth more sinful Sin. The Knowledge and Conscience that many have, serves for nothing, but to make their Sins greater, to exasperate and imbitter their Spirits and Lusts against God: *Why torments thou me before the Time?* 'Tis a devilish Disposition that is in us all, we cannot indure the Light, *because our Deeds are Evil.*

Let us but consider these Particulars, and we shall know the Power and Dominion of Sin. *First*, Consider the Extent of its Dominion, both in regard of all Men, and all in every Man: I say, *all Men*, there is none of us exempted from it; the most noble, and the most base. Sin is the Catholick King, the universal

King,

King, or rather Satan, who is the Prince of this World, and he rules the World, by this Law of Sin, which is even the Contradiction of the Law of God. Who of you believes this, that Satan's Kingdom is so spacious? that it is even over the most Part in the visible Church; this is the Emperor of the World. The *Turk* vainly arrogates this Title to himself, but the Devil is truly so, and we have God's own Testimony for it: All Kings, all Nobles, all Princes, all People, Rich and Poor, High and Low, are once Subjects of this Prince, ruled by this black Law of Sin. Oh! know your Condition, whose Servants ye are; *think not within your selves, we have Abraham for our Father*, we are baptized Christians: No know, that all of us are once the Childre of Satan, and do his Works, and fulfil his Will. But morever, *all that is in us*, is subject to this Law of Sin; all the Faculties of the Soul, the Understanding is under the Power of Darkness, the Affections under the Power of Corruption, the Mind is blinded, and the Heart is hardened, the Soul alienated from God, who is its Life, all the Members and Powers of a Man yielded up as Instruments of Unrighteousness, every one to execute that wicked Law, and fulfill the Lusts of the Flesh. This Dominion is over all a Man's Actions, even those that are in best Account and Esteem among Men; your honest, upright Dealing with Men, your most Religious Performances to God, they are more conformed to the Law of Sin, than to the Law of God, *Hag.* ii. 14. *This Nation, and the Work of their Hands, and that which they offer, is unclean.* All your Works, your good Works, are infected with this Pollution; Sin hath defiled your Persons, and they defile all your Actions, the Infection is mutual, these Actions again defile your Persons still more: *To the impure, all Things are impure, even their Mind and Conscience is defiled*, Tit. i. 15. Do what you can, ye who are in Nature cannot please God, 'tis but Obedience to the Law of Sin that is in you.

But, 2. Consider the Intenseness and Force of his Power, how mighty it is, in working against all Oppositions whatsoever, unless it be overcome by Almighty Power. Nothing but *All-might* can conquer this Power: The Spirit that works in Men by Nature, is of such Activity and Efficacy, that it drives Men on furiously, as if they were possessed, to their own Ruine. How much hath it of a Man's Consent? and so it drives him strongly and irresistibly. Much Will, Desire, and Greediness, will make Corruption run like a River, over all its Banks set in the Way thereof, Counsel, Perswasion, Law, Heaven, Hell, yet Men's Corruption must be over all those: Preaching, Threatnings, Convictions of Conscience, are but as flaxen Ropes to bind a *Sampson*, Sin within easily breaks them. In a Word, no created Power is of sufficient virtue to bind the strong Man, it must be one mightier than he, and that is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Do ye not see Men daily drawn after their Lusts, as Beasts, following their Senses as violently *as a Horse rusheth to the Battle?* If there be any Gain or Advantage to oyl the Wheels of Affection, O how runs Men head-long? There is no crying will hold them. In sum, Sin is become all one with us; tis incorporate into the Man, and become one with his Affections, and then these command,

SER-

SERMON VIII.

Verſ. 2. *For the Law of the Spirit of Life, in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free,* &c.

THAT whereabout the Thoughts and Diſcourſes of Men now run, is *Freedom* and *Liberty*, or Bondage and Slavery. All Men are afraid to loſe their Liberties, and be made Servants to Strangers: And indeed Liberty, whether National, or Perſonal, even in civil Reſpects, is a great Mercy and Privilege; but, alas! Men know not, neither do they conſider what is the Ground and Reaſon of ſuch Changes, and from what Fountain it flows, that a Nation of a long Time free from a foreign Yoke, ſhould now be made to ſubmit their Necks unto it. Many wonder that our Nation unconquered in the Days of Ignorance, and Darkneſs, ſhould now be conquered in the Days of the Goſpel; and there want not many ungodly Spirits, that will rather impute the Fault unto the Reformation of Religion, than take it to themſelves. There are many ſecret Heart-jealouſies among us, that Chriſt is a hard Maſter, and cannot be ſerved. But would you know the true Original of our apparent and threatned Bondage? Come and ſee, come and conſider ſomething expreſſed in theſe Words. All your Thoughts are buſied about civil Liberty, but you do not conſider that you are in Bondage while you are free, and that to worſe Maſters than you fear. We are under a Law of Sin and Death, that hath the Dominion and Sway in all Mens Affections and Converſations, and when the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God is offered unto us in the Goſpel, when the Son hath come to make us free, we love our own Chains, and will not ſuffer them to be looſed: Therefore it is that a Nation that hath deſpiſed ſuch a gracious Offer of Peace and Freedom in Jeſus Chriſt, is robbed and ſpoiled of Peace and Freedom. When this Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt is publiſhed and proclaimed openly unto Congregations, unto Judicatories, and unto Perſons, yet few do regard it; the generality are in Bondage to a contrary Law of Sin, and this they ſerve in the Luſts thereof. Yea, (which moſt of all aggravates and heightens the offence) even after we have all of us profeſſed a Subjection to the Law of God, and to Jeſus Chriſt, the *King* and *Law-giver*, we are in an extraordinary Way ingaged to the Lord, by many Oaths and Covenants to be his People; we did conſent that he ſhould be our King, and that we ſhould be ruled in our Profeſſion and Practice by his Word and Will, as the fundamental Laws of this his Kingdom; we did ſolemnly renounce all ſtrange Lords, that had

had tirannized over us; and did ſwear againſt them, never to yeild willing Obedience unto them; namely, the Luſts of the World, Ignorance of God, Unbelief, and Diſobedience. Now what became of all this Work, you may know, the generality of all Ranks have rebelled againſt that Lord, and Prince, and withdrawn from his Allegiance, and revolted unto the ſame Luſts and Ways, theſe ſame Courſes againſt which we had both by our Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and ſolemn Oaths engaged our ſelves; and ſo Men have voluntarily and heartily ſubjected themſelves unto the Laws of Sin, and Deſires of the Fleſh. Hence is the Beginning of our Ruine; becauſe we would not ſerve our own God and Lord in our own Land, therefore are ſo many led away captive to ſerve Strangers in another Land, therefore we are like to be Captives in our own Land; becauſe we refuſed Homage to our God, and obeyed ſtrange Lords within, therefore are we given up to the Luſt of Strangers without.

I would have you thinking, and that ſeriouſly, that there are worſe Maſters you ſerve, than theſe you moſt hate, and that there is a worſe Bondage, whereof you are inſenſible, than that you fear moſt, you fear Strangers, but your greateſt Evil is within you; you might retire within, and behold worſe Maſters, and more pernicious and mortal Enemies to your Well-being. This is the Caſe of all Men by Nature, and of all Men as far as in Nature; Sin ruling, commanding in them, and lording it over them, *and they willingly following after the Commandment*, and ſo oppreſſed and broken in Judgment. If you could but rightly look upon other Men, you might ſee, that they who are Servants of diverſe Luſts, are not their own Men (ſo to ſpeak) they have not the Command of themſelves. Look upon a Man given to Drunkenneſs, and what a Slave is he? Whither doth not his Luſt drive him? Let him bind himſelf with Reſolutions, with Vows, yet he cannot be holden by them; Shame before Men, Loſs of Eſtate, Decay of Health, temporal Puniſhment, nay, eternal, all ſet together, cannot keep him from fulfilling the Deſires of that Luſt, when he hath Opportunity. A Man given to Covetouſneſs, how doth he ſerve that Idol? How doth he forget himſelf to be a Man? Or to have a reaſonable Soul within him, he is ſo devoted to it; and thus it is with every Man by Nature: There may be many petty little Gods that he worſhips upon Occaſion, but every unrenewed Man hath ſome one Thing predominant in him, unto which he hath ſworn Obedience and Devotion. The Man moſt civilized, moſt abſtract from the groſſer outward Pollutions, yet certainly, his Heart within is but a Temple full of Idols, to the Love and Service of which he is devoted. There is ſome of the fundamental Laws of Satan's Kingdom, that rules in every natural Man, either *the Luſt of the Eyes*, or *the Luſt of the Fleſh*, or *the Pride of Life*; every Man ſacrificeth to one of theſe, his Credit and Honour, or his Pleaſure, or his Profit: Self, whatever Way refined and ſubtilized in ſome, yet at beſt it is but an Enemy to God; and without that Sphere of ſelf, cannot a Man act upon natural Principles, till a higher Spirit come in, which is here ſpoken of.

Oh! that you would take this for Bondage, to be under this woful Neceſſity of ſatisfying and *fulfilling the Deſires of your Fleſh and Mind*, Eph. ii. 2. Many account it only Liberty and Freedom, therefore they look upon the Laws of *the Spirit of Life*, as Cords and Bonds, and conſult *to*

caſt them off, and *cut them aſunder*; but conſider, what a wretched Life you have with your imperious Luſts. The Truth is, Sin is for the moſt part its own Puniſhment; I am ſure, you have more Labour and Toil in fulfilling the Luſts of Sin, than you might have in ſerving God. Mens Luſts are never at quiet, they are continually putting you on Service, they are ſtill driving and dragging Men headlong, hurrying them to and fro, and they cannot get reſt; what is the Cauſe of all the Diſquiet, Diſorder, Confuſion, Trouble and Wars in the World? *From whence do Contentions ariſe? Come they not hence*, (ſaith *James* iv. 1.) *even of the Luſts that War in our Members*. It is theſe that trouble the World, and theſe are the Troublers of *Iſrael*'s Peace, theſe take away both inward Peace, domeſtick Peace, and national Peace: Theſe Luſts, Covetouſneſs, Ambition, Pride, Paſſion, Self-love, and ſuch like; do ſet Nation againſt Nation, Men and Men, People and People by the Ears. Theſe multiply Buſineſſes beyond Neceſſity; theſe multiply Cares without Profit, and ſo bring forth Vexation and Torment. If a Man had his Luſts ſubdued, and his Affections compoſed unto Moderation and Sobriety, O what a Multitude of noiſom and hurtful Cares ſhould he then be freed from, what a ſweet Calmneſs ſhould poſſeſs that Spirit. Will you be perſwaded of it, Beloved in the Lord, that it were eaſier to ſerve the Lord, than to ſerve your Luſts, that they coſt you more Labour, Diſquiet, Perplexity, and Sorrow, than the Lord's Service will; that ſo you may weary of ſuch Maſters, and groan to be from under ſuch a Law of Sin.

But, if that will not ſuffice to perſwade you, then conſider, in the next Room, if you will needs ſerve a Law of Sin, you muſt needs be ſubject to a Law of Death; if you will not be perſwaded to quite the Service of Sin, then tell me, what think you of your Wages? *The Wages of Sin is Death*, that you may certainly expect; and can you look and long for ſuch Wages? God hath joined theſe together, by a perpetual Ordinance, they come in the World together, *Sin entered, and Death by Sin*, and they have gone Hand in Hand together ſince: And think you to diſſolve what God hath joined? Before you go further, and obey Sin more, think, I pray you, what it can give you, what doth it give you for the preſent? but much Pain and Toyl, and Vexation, in ſtead of promiſed Pleaſure, and Satisfaction. Sin doth with all Men, as the Devil doth with ſome of his ſworn Vaſſals, and Servants, they have a poor wretched Life with him, they are wearied and troubled, to ſatisfy all his unreaſonable and imperious Commands; he loadens them with baſe Service, and they are ſtill kept in Expectation of ſome great Reward, but for the preſent, they have nothing but Miſery and Trouble; and at length, he becomes the Executioner, and perpetual Tormenter of them whom he made to ſerve him; ſuch a Maſter is Sin, and ſuch Wages you may expect: Conſider then, what your Expectation is, before you go on, or engage further, *Death*. We are under a Law of bodily Death, therefore, we are mortal; our Houſe is like a ruinous Lodge, that props through, and one Day or other it muſt fall. Sin hath brought in the Seeds of Corruption in Mens Nature, which diſſolves it, elſe it had been immortal: But, there is a worſe *Death* after this, a living Death, in reſpect of which, ſimple Death would be choſen rather; Men will rather live very miſerably than die, Nature hath an Averſation

ſation of it, *Skin for Skin, and all for Life will a Man give:* Death imports a Deſtruction of Being, which every Thing naturally ſeeks to preſerve. But O! what a dreadful Life is it, worſe than Death, when Men will choſe Death rather than Life? O! how terrible will it be, to hear that Word, *Hills and Mountains fall on us, and cover us.* Men newly riſen, their Bodies and Souls meet again, after a long Separation, and this to be their mutual Entertainment one to another, the Body to wiſh it were ſtill in the Duſt, and the Soul to deſire it might never be in the Body: Surely, if we had ſo much Grace as to believe this, and tremble at it, before we be forced to act it, there were ſome Hope; if we could perſwade our ſelves once of this, that the Ways of Sin, all of them, how pleaſant, how profitable ſoever, whatſoever Gain they bring in, whatſoever Satisfaction they give, that they are nothing elſe, but *the Ways of Death, and go down to the Chambers of Hell,* that they will delude and deceive us, and ſo in end deſtroy us: If we might once believe this with our Heart, there were ſome Hope that we would break off from them, and chooſe the untroden Paths of Godlineſs, which are Pleaſantneſs and Peace. However, this is the Condition of all Men, once to be under Sin, and under a Sentence of Death for Sin: 'Tis the Unbelief of this, and a Conceit of Freedom, that ſecurely and certainly deſtroys the World, by keeping Souls from Jeſus Chriſt, the Prince of Life.

But there is a Delivery, and that is the Thing expreſſed in the Words, there is Freedom from both attainable; and I think, the very hearing of ſuch a Thing, that there is a Redemption from Sin and Miſery poſſible, yea, and that ſome are actually delivered from it; This might ſtir up in our Hearts, ſome holy Ambition, and earneſt Deſire after ſuch a State; how might it awake our Hearts after it: But this is the Wofulneſs of a natural Condition, that a Soul under the Power of Sin, can neither help it ſelf, nor rightly deſire Help from another, becauſe the Will is captive too; this makes it a very deſperate and remedileſs Buſineſs to any humane Expectation, becauſe ſuch a Soul is well pleaſed with its own Fetters, and loves its own Priſon, and ſo can neither long for Freedom, nor welcome the *Son* who is come to make *free.* But yet, there is a Freedom and Delivery, and if ye ask who are Partakers of it, the Text declares it to you, even theſe *who are in Jeſus Chriſt, and walk according to the Spirit* of Chriſt. Theſe all, and theſe only, who finding themſelves *dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes,* under the Power and Dominion of Sin, and likewiſe under the Sentence of Death and Condemnation, begin to lift up their Heads, upon the Hope of a Saviour, and to look unto their Redeemer, as poor Priſoners, whoſe Eyes and Looks are ſtrong Intreaties, and inſtead of many Requeſts; ſuch as give an intire Renounce unto their former Ways, and prevailing Luſts, and give up themſelves in Teſtimony of their Senſe of his unſpeakable Favour of Redemption, to be wholly his, and not their own. There are ſome Souls who are free from the Dominion of Sin, and from the Danger of Death, ſome who were once led about with *divers Luſts,* as well as others, who *walked after the Courſe of this World, and fulfilled the Deſires of the Fleſh, and were Children of Wrath* as well as others; *but now they are quickned in Chriſt Jeſus,* and have abandoned their former Way; they have another Rule, another Way, other Principles, their Study

is now to please God, and grow in Holiness; the Ways they delighted in, in former Times, are now loathsome; they think that a filthy Puddle, which they drank greedily of; and now 'tis all, or their chiefest Grief and Burden, that so much of that old Man, must be carried about with them, and so this expresseth many Groans from them with *Paul, Woe is me, miserable Man, who shall deliver me?* Such Souls are, in a manner (to speak so) half redeemed, who being made sensible of their Bondage, groan and pant for a Redeemer: The Day of their compleat Redemption is at Hand, all of you are Witnesses of this, that there are some thus freed, but they are Signs and Wonders indeed to the World; their Kinsmen, their Acquaintance, their Friends and Neighbours wonder what is become of them, they think it strange they walk not, and *run not into that same Excess of riot with them.* But whosoever thou art, that is escaped from under the Slavery of Sin, wonder at the World, that doth run so madly on their own Destruction, think it strange that thou ran so long with them, and that all will not run in these pleasant Ways with thee; think it strange, that thou runs so slowly, when so great a Prize is to be obtained, an immortal and never fading Crown. If mortifying and crucifying the Lusts of the Flesh, if dying to the World, and to thy self, seem very hard and unpleasant to thee, if it be as *the plucking out of thine Eye, and cutting off thine Hand*; know then, that Corruption is much alive yet, and hath much Power in thee; but remember, that if thou can have but so much Grace, and Resolution, as to kill and crucifie these Lusts, without foolish and hurtful Pity, if thou canst attain that Victory over thy self, thou shall never be a Loser, thou cannot repent it afterward: To die to our selves and the World, to kill Sin within: O! that makes way to a Life hid from the World, one Hour whereof is better than many Ages in sinful Pleasure: Quicken thy self often with this Thought, that there is a true Life after such a Death, and that thou canst not pass into it, but by the Valley of the Death of thy Lusts; remember, that thou dost but kill thine Enemies, which embrace, that they may strangle thee; and then stir up your self with this Consideration, the Life of Sin will be thy Death: Better enter Heaven, without these Lusts, than go to Hell with them.

SERMON IX.

Vers. 2. *For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Jesus Christ, hath made me free, from the Law of Sin and Death.*

THat which makes the Delivery of Men from the Tyranny of Sin and Death, most difficult, and utterly impossible unto Nature, is, that Sinners have given up themselves unto it, as if it were truly Liberty, that the Will and Affections of Men are

are conquered, and Sin hath its imperial Throne ſeated there: Other Conquerors invade Men againſt their Will, and ſo they rule againſt their Will; they contain Men in Subjection by Fear, and not by Love; and ſo when ever any Occaſion offers, they are glad to cut off the Yoke of unwilling Obedience. But, Sin hath firſt conquered Mens Judgment, by blinding it, putting out the Eye of the Underſtanding, and then invaded the Affections of Men, drawn them over to its Side, and by theſe, it keeps all in a moſt willing Obedience. Now, what Hopes are there then of Delivery, when the Priſoner accounts his Bondage Liberty, and his Priſon a Palace; what Expectation of Freedom, when all that is within us conſpires to the upholding that tyrranous Dominion of Sin, againſt all that would caſt it of its Uſurpation, as if they were mortal Enemies?

Yet there is a Delivery poſſible, but ſuch as would not have entered in the Heart of Man to imagine, and it is here expreſſed, *The Law of the Spirit of Life*, &c. This declares how, and by what Means we may be made free: Not indeed by any Power within us, not by any created Power without us. Sin is ſtronger than all theſe, becauſe its imperial Seat is within, far without the reach of all created Power; there may be ſome Means uſed by Men, to beat it out of the Outworks of the outward Man, to choſe it out of the external Members; ſome Means to reſtrain it from ſuch groſs Out-breakings, but there is none can lay Siege to the Soul within, or ſtorm the Underſtanding and Will, where it hath its principal Reſidence, 'tis inacceſſible, and impregnable by any human Power: No Intreaties or Perſwaſions, no Terrors or Threatnings can prevail, it can neither be ſtormed by Violence, nor undermined by Skill, becauſe it is within the Spirit of the Mind: Until at length ſome other Spirit ſtronger than our Spirit come; till the Spirit of Life which is in Chriſt, come and bind the ſtrong Man, and ſo make the poor Soul free. You heard that we were under a Law of Death, and under the Power of Sin; now there is another Law, anſwering this Law, and a Power to overcome this Power. You may indeed ask, by what Law or Authority can a Sinner that is bound over by God's Juſtice, unto Death and Condemnation be releaſed? Is there any Law above God's Law, and the Sentence of his Juſtice? The Apoſtle anſwers, that there is a Law above it, a Law after it, *the Law of the Spirit of Life*. Jeſus Chriſt oppoſes Law unto Law, the Law of Life unto the Law of Death; the Goſpel unto the Law, the ſecond Covenant unto the firſt. Thus it is then, *Jeſus Chriſt, the eternal Son of God, full of Grace and Truth*, did come in Man's ſtead, when the Law and Sentence of Death was paſt upon all Mankind, and there was no Expectation from the Terms of the firſt Covenant, that there ſhould be any Diſpenſation or Mitigation of the Rigour of it; he obtains this, that ſo many as God had choſen unto Life, their Sins and their Puniſhment might be laid on him, and ſo he took Part of our Fleſh, for this End, that he might be made a Curſe for us, and ſo redeem us from the Curſe: Thus having ſatisfied Juſtice, and fulfilled the Sentence of Death, by ſuffering Death, *Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, and the Head of all Things*. In Compenſation of this great and weighty Work given him by his Father, *All Judgment is committed to him*, and ſo he ſends out and proclaims another Law in *Zion*; another

Sentence

Sentence, even of Life and Abſolution unto all, and upon all them *that ſhall believe in his Name*. Thus you ſee the Law of Death abrogated by a new Law of Life, becauſe our Lord and Saviour was made under the Law of Death, and ſuffered under it, and ſatisfied it, that all his Seed might be freed from it, and might come under a Life-giving Law; ſo that it appears to be true, that was ſaid at firſt, *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt*, there is no Law, no Juſtice againſt them.

But then another Difficulty as great as the former, is in the Way, though ſuch a Law and Sentence of Life and Abſolution be pronounced in the Goſpel, in Chriſt's Name, yet we are *dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes*, we neither know nor feel our Miſery, nor can we come to a Redeemer: As there was a Law of Death above our Head, ſo there is a Law of Sin within our Hearts, which rules and commands us; and there is neither Will nor Ability to eſcape from under it. It is true, Life and Freedom is preached in Chriſt, to all that come to him for Life, to all that renounce Sin's Dominion is Remiſſion of Sin preached: But here is the greateſt Difficulty, how can a dead Soul ſtir, riſe and walk? How can a Slave to Sin, and a willing Captive renounce it, when he hath neither to will nor to do? Indeed if all had been purchaſed for us, if eternal Life and Forgiveneſs of Sins had been brought near us, and all the Buſineſs done to our Conſent, and that only wanting; if theſe had been the Terms, I have purchaſed Life, now riſe and embrace it of your ſelves; truly, it had been an unſucceſsful Buſineſs, Chriſt had loſt all that was given him, if the Moment and Weight of our Salvation had been hung upon our Acceptation. Therefore, it is well provided for this alſo, that there ſhould be a Power to overcome this Power, a Spirit of Life in Chriſt to quicken dead Sinners, and raiſe them up, and draw them to him. And ſo, the ſecond *Adam* hath this Prerogative beyond the firſt, that he is not only a living Soul in himſelf, but a quickning Spirit to all that are given him of the Father, 1 *Cor.* xv. 45. So then, as Chriſt Jeſus hath Law and Right on his Side, to free us from Death, ſo he hath Vertue and Power in him to accompliſh our Delivery from Sin: As he hath fair Law to looſe the Chains of Condemnation, and to repeal the Sentence paſt againſt us, without Prejudice to God's Juſtice, he having fully ſatisfied the ſame in our Name; ſo he hath ſufficient Power given him, to looſe the Fetters of Sin from off us. When he hath pay'd the Price, and ſatisfied the Father, ſo that Juſtice can crave nothing: Yet, he hath one Adverſary to deal with, Satan hath Sinners bound with the Cords of their own Luſts, in a Priſon of Darkneſs, and Unbelief; Jeſus Chriſt therefore comes out to conquer this Enemy, and to redeem his elect Ones, from that unjuſt Uſurpation of Sin, to bring them out of the Priſon by the ſtrong Hand; and therefore, he is one mighty, and able to ſave to the uttermoſt, he hath Might to do it, as well as Right to it.

Conſider then, my Beloved, theſe two Things, which are the Breaſts of our Conſolation, and the Foundation of our Hope; we are once loſt and utterly undone, both in regard of God's Juſtice, and our own utter Inability to help our ſelves, which is ſtrengthned by our Unwillingneſs, and thus made a more deſperate Buſineſs: Now God hath provded a ſuitable Remedy, *he hath laid Help on one that is mighty* indeed, who hath Almighty Power, and by his Power he firſt conflicted with the Puniſhment of our Sins, and

and with his Father's Wrath, and hath overcome, discharged and satisfied that, and so hath purchased a Right unto us, to give Salvation to whom he will; he conquered, and by his Power obtains this supream Authority of Life and Death.

Now, having this Authority established in his Person, the next Work is to apply this Purchase, actually to confer this Life; and therefore, he hath Almighty Power to raise up dead Sinners, *to create us again to good Works*, to redeem us from the Tyranny of Sin and Satan, whose Slaves we are. He hath a Spirit of Life, which he communicates to his Seed, he breathes it into these Souls that he died for, and dispossesseth that powerful Corruption that dwells in us. Hence it comes to pass, that *they walk after the Spirit*, though they be in the *Flesh*; because the powerful *Spirit* of Christ hath entred, and taken Possession of their Spirits, *Isa.* lix. 20, 21.

Let us not be discouraged in our Apprehensions of Christ, when we look on our ruinous and desperate Estate, let us not conclude, it is past Hope, and past his Help too. We do proclaim in the Name of Jesus Christ, that there is no Sinner, howsoever justly under a Sentence of Death and Damnation, but they may in him find a Relaxation from that Sentence, and that without the impairing of God's Justice, and this is a marvelous Ground of Comfort, that may establish our Souls, 1 *John* i. 9. even this, that Law and Justice is upon Christ's Side, and nothing to accuse, or plead against a Sinner, that imploys him for his Advocate. But, know this also, that you are not delivered from Death, that you may live under Sin; nay, you are redeemed from Death, that you may be freed from the Law of Sin, but that must be done by his Almighty Spirit, and cannot be otherways done.

I know not whether of these is Matter of greatest Comfort, that there is in Christ, a Redemption from the Wrath of God, and from Hell, and that there is a Redemption too, from Sin, and Corruption which dwells within us; but sure I am, both of them will be most sweet and comfortable to a Believer, and without both, Christ were not a compleat Redeemer, nor we compleatly redeemed. Neither would a believing Soul, in which there is any measure of this new Law, and divine Life, be satisfied without both these. Many are miserably deluded in their Apprehensions of the Gospel, they take it up thus, as if it were nothing but a Proclamation of Freedom from Misery, from Death and Damnation, and so the most Part catch at nothing else in it, and from thence takes Liberty to walk after their former Lusts and Courses; this is the woful practical Use, that the generality of Hearers, make of the free Intimation of Pardon, and Forgivenness of Sin, and Delivery from Wrath; they admit some general Notion of that, and stops there, and examines not what further is in the Gospel, and so you will see the Slaves of Sin, professing a kind of Hope of Freedom from Death, the Servants and Vassals of Corruption, who walk after the Course of this World, and fulfill the Lusts, and Desires of their Mind and Flesh, yet fancying a Freedom and Immunity from Condemnation, Men living in Sin, yet thinking of escaping Wrath, which Dreams could not be entertained in Men, if they did drink in all the Truth, and open both their Ears to the Gospel, if our Spirits were not narrow and limited, and so excluded the one half of the Gospel, that is, our Redemption

tion from Sin. There is too much of this, even among the Children of God, a ſtrange Narrowneſs of Spirit, which admits not whole and intire Truth; it falls out often, that when we think of Delivery from Death and Wrath, we forget in the mean Time the End and Purpoſe of that, which is, that we may be freed from Sin, *and ſerve the living God without fear.* And if at any Time we conſider, and buſy our Thoughts about Freedom from the Law of Sin, and Victory over Corruption; ſuch is the Scantineſs of Room and Capacity in our Spirits, that we loſe the Remembrance of Delivery from Death, and Condemnation, in Chriſt Jeſus; thus we are toſſed between two Extreams, the Quick-ſands of Preſumption and Wantonneſs, and the Rocks of Unbelief and Deſpair, or Diſcouragement, both of which, do kill the Chriſtian's Life, and make all to fade and wither. But this were the Way, and only Way, to preſerve the Soul in good Eaſe, even to keep theſe two continually in our Sight, that we are redeemed from Death and Miſery in Chriſt, and that not to ſerve our ſelves, or to continue in our Sins, but that we may be redeemed from that Sin, that dwells in us, and that both theſe are purchaſed by Jeſus Chriſt, and done by his Power; the one in his own Perſon, the other by his Spirit within us. I would have you correcting your Miſapprehenſions of the Goſpel: Do not ſo much look on Victory and Freedom from Sin, as a Duty and Task, though we be infinitely bound to it; but rather as a Privilege and Dignity conferred upon us by Chriſt: Look not upon it, I ſay, only as your Duty, as many do; and by this Means are diſcouraged from the Sight of their own Infirmity and Weakneſs, as being too weak for ſuch a ſtrong Party: But look upon it as the one half, and greater half of the Benefit conferred by Chriſt's Death, as the greater Half of the Redemption which the Redeemer by his Office is bound to accompliſh: *He will redeem Iſrael from all his Iniquities; with him is plenteous Redemption,* Pſal. cxxx. 7, 8. This is the Plenty, this is the Sufficiency of it, that he redeems not only from Miſery, but from Iniquity, and that, all Iniquities. I would not deſire a Believer's Soul to be in a better Poſture hereaway, than this, to be looking upon Sin in dwelling, as his Bondage, and Redemption from it, as Freedom; to account himſelf in ſo far free, as the free Spirit of Chriſt enters and writes that free Law of Love and Obedience in his Heart, and bolts out theſe baſe Characters of the Law of Sin. It were a good Temper to be Groaning for the Redemption of the Soul; and why doth a Believer groan for the Redemption of the Body, but becauſe he ſhall then be freed wholly from the Law of Sin, and from the Preſence of Sin? I know not a greater Argument, to a gracious Heart, to ſubdue his Corruption, and ſtrive for Freedom from the Law of Sin, than the Freedom obtained from the Law of Death; nor is there any clearer Argument and Evidence of a Soul delivered from Death, than to ſtrive for the Freedom of the Spirit from the Law of Sin, theſe jointly help one another; Freedom from Death, will raiſe up a Chriſtian's Heart to aſpire to a Freedom and Liberty from Sin: And again, Freedom from Sin will witneſs and evidence that ſuch a one is delivered from Death. When Freedom from Death is an Inducement to ſeek after Freedom from Sin, and Freedom from Sin a Declaration of Freedom from Death, then all is well; and indeed thus it will be in ſome Meaſure with every Soul that is quickned by this new

Law

Law of the Spirit of Life, for 'tis the Entry of this that expells its contrary, the Law of Sin. And indeed the Law must enter, the Command and the Promise must enter into the Soul, and the Affections of the Soul be enlivened thereby, or rather the Soul changed into the Similitude of that Mold, or else the having of it in a Book, or in One's Memory and Understanding, will never make him the richer or freer. A Christian looks to the Pattern of the Law, and the Word of the Gospel without; but he must be changed into the Image of it, by beholding it; and so he becomes a living Law to himself. The Spirit writes these Precepts and Practices of Christ's, in which he commands Imitation, upon the *fleshly Tables of the Heart*: And now the Law is not a Rod above his Head, as above a Slave, but it is turned in a Law of Love within his Heart, and hath something like a natural Instinct in it: All that Men can do, either to themselves, or others, will not purchase the least Measure of Freedom from predominant Corruptions, cannot deliver you from your Sins, till this free Spirit that *blows where he pleases*, come. 'Tis our Part to hoise up Sails, and wait for the Wind; to use Means, and wait on him in his Way and Order: But all will be in vain, till this stronger One come, and *cast out the strong Man*, till this arbitrary and free Wind blow from Heaven, and fill the Sails.

SERMON X.

Vers. 3. *For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the Flesh, God sending his own Son in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, and for Sin condemned Sin in the Flesh.*

THE greatest Design that ever God had in the World, is certainly the sending of his own Son into the World; and it must needs be some great Business, that drew so excellent and glorious a Person out of Heaven: The Plot and Contrivance of the World was a profound Piece of Wisdom and Goodness; the making of Men after God's Image, was done by a high and glorious Counsel, *Let us make Man after our Image*; there was something special in this Expression, importing some peculiar Excellency in the Work it self, or some special Depth of Design about it. But what think you of this Consultation, let one of us be made Man, after Man's Image and Likeness, that must be a strange Piece of Wisdom and Grace: *Great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the Flesh.* No Wonder though *Paul* cryed out, as one swallowed up with this Mystery; for indeed it must be some odd Matter, beyond all that is in the

Creation, wherein there are many Myſteries, able to ſwallow up any Underſtanding, but that in which they were firſt formed. This muſt be the Chief of the Works of God, the rareſt Piece of them all, *God to become Man*, the Creator of all, to *come in the Likeneſs of a Creature*, He *by whom all Things were created*, and *do yet conſiſt*, to come in the Likeneſs of the moſt wretched of all. Strange, that we do not dwell more, in our Thoughts and Affections, on this Subject: Either we do not believe it, or if we did, we could not but be raviſhed with Admiration at it. *John* the beloved Diſciple, who was often neareſt unto Chriſt, dwelt moſt upon this, and made it the Subject of his Preaching; *that which was from the Beginning, which we have heard, and ſeen, and handled*, &c. *John* i. 1. He ſpeaks of that Myſtery, as if he were imbracing Jeſus Chriſt in his Arms, and holding him out to others, ſaying, *Come and ſee*. This Divine Myſtery, is the Subject of theſe Words read, but the Myſtery is ſome what unfolded and opened up to you in them, yet ſo, as it will not diminiſh, but increaſe the Wonder of a believing Soul. It is Ignorance that magnifies other Myſteries, which vilify through Knowledge; but it is the true Knowledge of this Myſtery, that makes it the more wonderful; whereas Ignorance only makes it common and deſpicable.

There are three Things then of ſpecial Conſideration in the Words, which may declare and open unto you ſomething of this Myſtery:

Firſt, What was the Ground and Reaſon, or Occaſion of the Son's ſending into the World; *next*, What the Son, being ſent, did in the World: And the *third*, For what End and Uſe it was. What Fruit we have by it.

The Ground and Reaſon of God's ſending his Son, is, becauſe there was an Impoſſibility upon the Law, to ſave Man, which Impoſſibility was not the Law's Fault, but Man's Defect, by reaſon of the Weakneſs, and Impotency of our Fleſh, to fulfill the Law. Now, God having choſen ſome to Life, and Man having put this Obſtruction and Impediment in his own Way, which made it impoſſible for the Law to give him Life, though it was firſt given out as the Way of Life; therefore, that God ſhould not fail in his glorious Deſign of ſaving his Choſen, he chooſed to ſend his own Son, in the Likeneſs of Fleſh, as the only Remedy of the Law's Impoſſibility. That which Chriſt, being ſent into the Likeneſs of Fleſh, did, is the condemning of Sin in the Fleſh, by a Sacrifice offered for Sin; even the Sacrifice of *his own Body upon the Croſs*. He came in the Likeneſs, not of Fleſh ſimply, for he was really a Man; but *in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, though *without Sin*, yet like a Sinner; as to the outward Appearance, a Sinner, becauſe ſubject to all theſe Infirmities and Miſeries, which Sin did firſt open a Door for. Sin was the Inlet of Afflictions, of bodily Infirmities and Neceſſities, of Death it ſelf; and when the Floods of theſe did overflow Chriſt's Humane Nature, it was a great Preſumption to the World, who look and judge according to the outward Appearance, that Sin was the Sluice opened to let in ſuch an Inundation of Calamity. Now he being thus in the Likeneſs of a Sinner, though not a Sinner, he, *for Sin*, that is, becauſe of Sin that had entered upon Man, and made Life impoſſible to him by the Law; by Occaſion of that great Enemy of God which had conquered Mankind, he *condemned Sin in his Fleſh*, he overthrew it in its Plea and Power againſt us;

us; he condemned that which condemned us, overcome it in Judgment, and made us free, by sustaining the Curse of it in his Flesh, he cut off all its Plea against us. This is the great Work and Business, which was worthy of so noble a Messenger, his own Son, sent to conquer his greatest Enemy that he hates most. And then in the third Place, You see what Benefit or Fruit redounds to us by it: What was the End and Purpose of it? *Verse 4. That the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us*; that seeing it was impossible for us to fulfill the Righteousness of the Law, and so became impossible to the Law, to fulfill our Reward of Life; it might be fulfilled by him in our Name, and *so the Righteousness of the Law being fulfilled in us* by Christ, the Reward also of eternal Life might be fulfilled by the Law to us; he having removed the Impediment of our Weakness, it might be not only possible, but certain to us.

You would consider then, the Reason of Christ's coming. God made at first a Covenant with Man, promising him Life, upon perfect Obedience to his Law; and threatning Death and Damnation upon the Transgression thereof. You see then, what was the Way of Life to *Adam* in the State of Innocency, he was made able to satisfy the Law with Obedience, and the Law was abundantly able to satisfy him, by giving Life unto him; God's Image upon Man's Soul instructed him sufficiently for the one, and the Lord's Promise made to him, was as sufficient to accomplish the other; so that there was no Impossibility then upon the Law, by Reason of the Strength which God gave Man. But, it continued not long so, Sin entering upon Man, utterly disabled him, and because the Strength of that Covenant consisted in that mutual and joint Concurrence of God's Promise and Mans Obedience, this being broken, the one Party falling off, that Life and Salvation becomes impossible to the Promise alone, to perform. It is Sin that is the Weakness and Impotency of Man; this is the Disease hath consumed his Strength, and concluded Man under a two fold Impossibility; an Impossibility to satisfy the Curse, and an Impossibility to obey the Command. There are three Things in the Covenant of Works, A Command of Obedience, and a Threatning of Wrath and Condemnation upon Disobedience, and a Promise of Life upon Obedience; Sin hath disabled us every Way, in Relation to the Curse and Threatning. Man cannot satisfy it, no Price, no Ransom found sufficient for the Soul, *for the Redemption of it is precious, and ceaseth for ever*; that Curse hath infinite Wrath in it, which must needs swallow up finite Man. And then in Relation to the Command, there is such a Diminution of all the Powers of the Soul, such a Corruption ad Defilement by Reason of the first Sin, that wherein Man's Strength lay, which was God's Image, is cut off, and spoiled; so that henceforth it is become impossible to yield any acceptable Obedience to the Commandment: And hence it is, from our Impossibility to obey in Time to come, that there is a holy and faultless Impossibility upon the Promise, to give Life unto Mankind; so you see that the Law cannot do it, because of our Weakness. If either Man, while he was made upright, had continued in Obedience, or Man now fallen from Uprightness, could satisfy for the Fault done, and walk without any Blemish in Time coming, then it were feasible for the Law to give Life to us; but the one was not done, and the other now cannot de done;

and so the Impossibility of Life by Works, is refounded upon our selves, who would not when we could, and now neither will nor can obey. Thus we may see clearly, that all Mankind must needs perish, for any Thing that Man can do; and according to that first Transaction of God with Man, unless some other Way and Device be found out, which indeed was far from the Eyes of all living, without the Reach of their Invention or Imagination. I believe, if all the Creatures higher or lower, that have any Reason, had conveened to consult of this Business, how to repair that Breach made in the Creation, by Man's Sin, they might have vexed their Brains, and racked their Inventions unto all Eternity, and yet never have fallen upon any probable Way of making up this Breach; they might have taken up a Lamentation, not as the Bemoaners of *Babylon*'s Ruine, *we would have healed thee, and thou wouldst not*; but rather thus, we would heal thee, but we could not, and thou wouldst not. This Design, which is here mentioned of repairing the Breach, by destroying that which made it, *Sin*; it lay hid in the Depth of God's Wisdom, till it pleased himself to vent and publish it unto poor forlorn and desperate Man, who, out of Despair of Recovery, had run away to hide himself; a poor Shift indeed, for him to think that he could hide himself from him to whom *Darkness is as Light*, and to flee from him whose Kingdom is over all, and who is present in all the Corners of his universal Kingdom; in Hell, in Heaven, in the utmost Corners of the Earth: But this silly Invention shews how hopeless the Case was.

Though this be the Case and Condition of Man by Nature, yet strange it is, to see every Man by Nature attempting his own Delivery; and fancying a Probability, yea, a Certainty of that which is so impossible, that is, an attaining of Life by our selves, according to the Law and first Covenant of Works. Though our Strength be gone, yet, like *Sampson*, Men rise up and think to walk and rouse up themselves, as in former Times, as if their Strength were yet in them, and many never perceive that it is gone, till they be laid hold on by Satan, according to the Law's Injunction, and bound into Chains of everlasting Darkness; but then alas, 'tis too late, for they cannot save themselves, and the Season of a Saviour is gone; and this, no doubt, will be the Accession of the Bitterness and Torment that damned Souls shall be into, that they dreamed of attaining Life by a Law, that now is nothing but a Ministration of Death; that they lost Life by seeking their own Righteousness; and made the Law more able to condemn them, by their apprehending in themselves an Ability to satisfy it, and by resting in a Form of Obedience to it. There is something natural in it. *Adam* and all his Posterity was once to be saved this Way, so the Terms run at first, *Do this and live*; no wonder that something of that Impression be retained, but that which was a vertue in *Adam*, while he retained Integrity, and fulfilled his Duty, is a mighty Fault, and presumptuous Madness in us, who have fallen from that blessed Estate. If Man, doing his Duty, expected a Reward, according to the Promise, it was commendable; but for Man, now rebellious and stubborn, and *come short of the Glory of God*, to look for a Reward from God, against whom he wareth continually, and that for Rebellion and Enmity, it is damnable. But besides this, I think this Principle of Self-righteousness is much corrupted in Man now,

now, by what it was in *Adam*; I conceive though *Adam* looked for Life upon Obedience, according to the Promiſe, yet he reſted not on, and truſted not in his Obedience. I believe, a holy and righteous Man would be a humble Man too, and would rather glory in Gods' Grace, than in his own Works; the Senſe of a free and undeſerved Promiſe, would not ſuffer him to reflect ſo much upon his own Obedience, or put ſuch a Price upon it. But now, 'tis conjoined with unmeaſurable Pride, and ariſes only from Self-love: There is no Ground of Men's looking to be ſaved by their own Doings, but the in-bred Pride and Self-love of the Heart, together with the Ignorance of a better Righteouſneſs. *Adam* hid himſelf among the Trees, and covered his Nakedneſs with Leaves, and truly the Shift of the moſt Part is no better. How vain and empty Things do Men truſt unto, and from them conclude an Expectation of eternal Life? The moſt Part think to be ſafe in the Midſt or Thick of the Trees of the Church; if they be in the Throng of a viſible Church, and adorned with Church Privileges, as Baptiſm, hearing the Word, and ſuch like, they do perſwade themſelves, all will be well. Some have Civility, and a blameleſs Converſation before Men, and with ſuch Acts of Righteouſneſs, or rather Wants of ſome groſs Outbreakings, do many cover their Nakedneſs. If there be yet a larger, and finer Garment, of Profeſſion of Religion, and ſome outward Performances of Service to God, and Duties to Men, O then, Men do inforce upon their own Hearts, the Perſwaſion of Heaven, and think their Nakedneſs cannot be ſeen through it. Theſe are the Coverings, theſe are the Grounds of Claim and Title, that Men have to eternal Life, and in the mean Time they are ignorant of that large glorious Robe of Righteouſneſs, which Chriſt by his Obedience and Sufferings did weave for naked Sinners.

But as the Impoſſibility of the Law's ſaving us, by Reaſon of the Weakneſs of the Fleſh, was the Ground and Occaſion of Chriſt's coming into the Fleſh, for to ſupply that Defect, and take away that Impoſſibility, ſo the Senſe and Sight of this Impoſſibility in us to ſatisfy and fulfil the Law, and of the Law to give Life, is the very Ground and Reaſon of a Soul's coming to Jeſus Chriſt, for the ſupplying of this Want. As the Son ſhould not have come in the *Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, unleſs it had been otherwiſe impoſſible, by Man's doing or ſuffering, that Life ſhould be obtained; ſo will not a Soul come to Chriſt, the Son of God, through the Vail of his Fleſh, until it diſcern and feel that it is otherwiſe impoſſible to ſatisfy the Law, or attain Life. That was the impulſive Cauſe, (if we may ſay that there was any Cauſe beſide his Love) why Chriſt came, even Man's Miſery, and remedileſs Miſery; and this is the ſtrong Motive and Impulſive, that drives a poor Sinner unto Jeſus Chriſt, the Senſe and Impreſſion of its deſperate and loſt Eſtate without him. As there was firſt Sin, and then a Saviour dying for Sin, becauſe nothing elſe could ſuffice, ſo there muſt be in the Soul, firſt the Apprehenſion of Sin, and that remedileſs Sin, incurable Sin, by any created Power or Act; and then the Sight of a Saviour coming to deſtroy Sin, and the Works of the Devil, and deſtroying it, by dying for it. There is no Imployment for this *Phyſician*, upon every ſlight Apprehenſion of a Wound or Sickneſs, till it be found incurable, and Help ſought elſewhere be ſeen to be in vain; indeed upon the leaſt Apprehenſi-

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on of Sin and Misery, Men ought to come to Christ; we shall not set or prescribe any Measure of Conviction to exclude you, if you can but come to him indeed, upon the least Measure of it, *you will not be cast out*, according to his own Word; but as certain it is, that Men will not come to this *Physician*, till they find no other can save them. These two Things, I wish, were deeply and seriously thought upon, that you cannot satisfy God's Justice, for the least Point of Guilt, and then, that you cannot do any Thing in Obedience to please God. There is a strange Inconsideration; yet, I may say, Ignorance among us, when you are challenged and convinced of Sin, (as there is no Conscience so benum'd, but in some measure it accuseth every Man of many Wrongs) what is the Course you fall on, to pacify it, or please God? Indeed if you can get any Shadow of Repentance, if it were but a bare Acknowledgment of the Fault, you excuse your selves in your own Consciences, and answer the Accusation, by it; either some other good Works formerly done occurr to you, or some Resolution for Amendment in Time coming; and this you think shall pacify God, and satisfy Justice: But alas, you are far from the Righteousness of God, and you do err even in the very Foundation of Religion; *these are but Sparks of your own kindling*, and for all these, *you shall ly down in Darkness and Sorrow*; these are but the vain Expiations and Excuses of natural Consciences, which are led to some Sense of a Deity, by the Law written in their Heart. But, consider this once, you must first satisfy the Curse of the Law, which you are under, before you can be in any Capacity to please him, by new Obedience: Now, if you should undertake to pay for your former Breaches of the Law, that will eternally ruine you; and therefore, you see the Punishment is lengthned throughout Eternity, to them who have this to undergo alone. Go then, and first suffer the eternal Wrath of an infinite God, and then come and offer Obedience if thou can. But now, thou art in a double Error, both of which are damnable; One is, thou thinks thou art able by Consideration, and Resolution, to perform some acceptable Obedience to God; another, that Performance of Obedience, and amending in Time coming, will expiate former Transgressions. If either of these were true, Christ needed not to have come *in the Likeness of sinful Flesh*, because it had been possible for the Law to save thee. But now, the Truth is, such is the utter Disability and Impotency of Man through Sin, that he can neither will nor do the least Good, truly good and pleasant to God; his Nature and Person being defiled, all he doth is unclean. And then, suppose that it were possible, that Man could do any Thing in Obedience to his Commands, yet it being unquestionable, that all have sinned, Satisfaction must first be made to God's Threatning, *Thou shalt die*, before Obedience be acceptable, and that is impossible too. This then, I leave upon your Consciences, beseeching you to lay to Heart, the Impossibility you are encompassed with on both Hands; Justice requiring a Ransom, and you have none, and Justice requiring new Obedience again, and you can give none; old Debts urging you, and new Duty pressing you, and ye alike disabled for both; that so finding your selves thus invironed with Indigency and Impossibility within, you may be constrained to flee out of your selves, unto him that is both able and willing. This is not a superficial Business,

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as you make it; it is not a Matter of Fancy, or Memory, or Expreſſion, as moſt make it; believe me, it is a ſerious Buſineſs, a Soul-work, ſuch an Exerciſe of Spirit, as uſeth to be, when the Soul is between Deſpair and Hope. Impoſſibility within, driving a Soul out of it ſelf, and Poſſibility, yea, Certainty of Help without, even in Chriſt, drawing a Soul in to him; thus is the Cloſure made, which is the Foundation of our Happineſs.

SERMON XI.

Verſ. 3. *For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the Fleſh, God ſending his own Son,* &c.

FOR what purpoſe do we meet thus together? I would we knew it, then it might be to ſome better Purpoſe. In all other Things we are rational, and do nothing of Moment, without ſome End and Purpoſe; but alas! in this Matter of greateſt Moment, our going about *Divine Ordinances,* we have ſcarce any diſtinct or deliberate Thought of the End and Riſe of them. Sure I am, we muſt all confeſs this, that all other Buſineſſes in our Life, is almoſt impertinent to the great End, *The Salvation of our Souls*, in reſpect of theſe, in which God, in a Manner, tryſts with Men, and comes to dwell with them; theſe have the neareſt and moſt immediate Connection with God's Glory, and our Happineſs; and yet, ſo wretched and unhappy are we, that we ſtudy, and endeavour a kind of Wiſdom and Diligence in other petty Things, which are to periſh with the uſing, and have no great Reach to make our Condition either better or worſe; and yet, we have no Wiſdom nor Conſideration, or Attention, to this great and momentuous Matter, the Salvation of our Souls. Is it not high Time we were ſhaken out of our empty, vain, and unreaſonable Cuſtom, in going about ſuch ſolemn Duties? When the Wrath of God is already kindled, and his mighty Arm is *ſhaking terribly the Earth,* and ſhaking us out of all our Neſts of Quietneſs and Conſolation, which we did build in the Creature. God calls for a reaſonable Service, but I muſt ſay, the Service of the moſt, is an unreaſonable and brutiſh Kind of Work, little or no Conſideration of what we are about, little or no Purpoſe or Aim at any real Soul Advantage. Conſider, my beloved, what you are doing, undoing your ſelves with Ignorance of your own Eſtate, and Unacquaintedneſs with a better; whence it comes, that you live contented in your Miſery, and have no lively Stirrings after this bleſſed Remedy. That for which we met together, is to learn theſe two Things, and always to be learning them, to know ſenſibly our own wretched Miſery, and that bleſſed Remedy, which God hath provided

ed, 'tis the Sum of the Scriptures, and we desire daily to lay it out before you, if at length it may please the Lord to awake you out of your Dream, and give you the Light of his Salvation.

You hear of a Weakness of the Flesh; but if you would understand it aright, 'tis not properly and simply a *Weakness*; that supposeth always some Life, and some Strength remaining; 'tis not like an Infirmity, that only indisposeth to wonted Action, in the wonted Vigour; but 'tis such a Weakness, as the Apostle elsewhere, *Eph.* ii. 1. calls *Deadness*. 'Tis such a Weakness, as may be called *Wickedness*, yea, *Enmity to God*, as it is here. Our Souls are not diseased properly, for that supposeth there is some remnant of spiritual Life, but they are *dead in Sins and Trespasses*; and so not 'tis Infirmity but Impossibility, such a Weakness as makes Life and Salvation impossible by us, both utter Unwillingness and extream Inability; these two concur in all Mankind, no Strength to satisfy Justice, or obey the Law, and no Willingness either. There is a general practical Mistake in this; Men conceive, that their Natures are weak to good; but few apprehend the Wickedness and Enmity that is in them to God and all Goodness: All will grant some Defect and Inability, and 'tis a general Complaint, but to consider that *this Inability is an Impossibility*, that this Defect is a Destruction of all spiritual Good in us, the Saving Knowledge of this is given to few, and to these only whose Eyes the Spirit opens. There may be some Strugglings and Wrestlings of natural Spirit, to help themselves, and upon the Apprehension of their own Weakness, to raise up themselves, by serious Consideration, and earnest Diligence, to some Pitch of serving God, and to some Hope of Heaven. But, I do suspect that it proceeds in many from the want of this thorough and deep Conviction of desperate Wickedness; few really believes that Testimony which God hath given of Man, he is *not only weak, but wicked*, and not only so, but *desperately wicked*, and that is not all, the Heart is *deceitful too*, and to compleat the Account, *deceitful above all Things*, Jer. xvii. 15. A strange Character of Man, given by him that formed the Spirit of Man within, and made it once upright, and so knows best how far it hath departed from the first Pattern. O! who of us believes this in our Hearts? But that is the Deceitfulness of our Hearts, to cover our desperate Wickedness from our own discerning, and and flatter our selves with self-pleasing Thoughts. If once this Testimony were received, that the Weakness of the Flesh is a desperate Wickedness, such a wretched and accursed Condition, as there is no Hope therein, as is incurable to any created Power, and makes us incurable and certainly lost, then, I say, the Deceitfulness of the Heart were in some Measure cured: Believe the desperate Wickedness of your Natures, and then you have deceived the Deceitfulness of your Hearts, to your own Advantage; then you have known that which none can know aright, till the Searcher of the Heart and Reins reveal it unto them.

Thus Man stands inviroñed with Impossibilities, his own Weakness and Wickedness, and the Law's Impossibility, by Reason of that; these do shut up all Access to the Tree of Life, and are instead of a flaming Sword to guard it; our Legs are cut off by Sin, and the Law cannot help us, nay, our Life is put out, and the Law cannot quicken us; it declares our Duty, but gives no Ability, it teacheth well, but it

it cannot make us learn. While we are in this Posture, God himself steps in to succour miserable undone Man; and here is the Way, he sends his Son in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, and Grace and Truth comes by him, which doth remove these Impediments that stopt all Access to Life.

This is a high Subject, but it concerns the lowest and most wretched amongst us; and that is indeed the Wonder of it, that there should be such a Mystery, such a Depth in this Work of Redemption of poor Sinners, so much Business made, and such strange Things done for repairing our Ruines. In the Consideration of this we may borrow that Meditation of the Psalmist's, *Psa.* viii. 4. *Lord, what is Man, that thou should thus magnify him*; and make him not a little lower than Angels, but far higher? *For he took not on him the Nature of Angels*, Heb. ii. 14, 16. *But took Part with the poor Children of Flesh and Blood.* This deserves a Pause; we shall stay a little, and view it more fully in the Steps and Degrees that this Mystery rises and ascends up by. But, Oh! for such an ascending Frame of Heart as this deserves; 'tis a Wonder it doth not draw us upward beyond our own Element, 'tis a Subject of such Admiration in it self, and so much Concernment to us.

Every Word hath Weight in it, and a peculiar Emphasis; there is a Gradation that the Mystery goes upon, till it come to the Top; every Word hath a Degree or Step in it, whereby it rises high, and still higher. *God sent*, that is very strange; but *God sent his Son*, is most strange: But go on, and 'tis still the stranger, *In the Likeness of Flesh*, and that *sinful Flesh*, &c. In all which Degrees, you see God is descending and coming lower and lower, but the Mystery ascends, and goes higher and higher; the lower God come down, the higher the Wonder rises up. Still the smaller and meaner that God appears in the Flesh, the greater is the *Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the Flesh.*

If you would arise up to the sensible and profitable Understanding of this Mystery, you must first descend into the Depths of your own natural Wretchedness and Misery, in which Man was lying, when it pleased God to come so low to meet him, and help him: I say, you must first go down that Way in the Consideration of it, and then you shall ascend to the Use and Knowledge of this Mystery of Godliness.

God's Sending hath some Weight of Wonder in it, at the very first Apprehension of it; if you did but know who he is, and what we are, a Wonder it had been, that he had suffered himself to be sent unto by us, that any Message, any Correspondence should pass between Heaven and Earth, after so foul a Breach of Peace and Covenant, by Man on Earth. Strange, that Heaven was not shut up from all Intercourse with that accursed Earth. If God had sent out an Angel to destroy Man, as he sent to destroy *Jerusalem*, 2 Chron. xxi. 15. If he had *sent out his Armies to kill those his Enemies*, who had renounced the Yoke of his Obedience, it had been Justice, *Mat.* xxi. 41. and xxii. 7. If he had sent a cruel Messenger against Man, who had now acted so horrid a Rebellion, it had been no strange Thing, as he did send an Angel with a *flaming Sword to encompass the Tree of Life*; he might have enlarged that Angel's Commission, to take Vengeance on Man: And this is the Wonder, he did not send after this Manner. But what Heart could this enter into? Who could imagine such a

Thing as this? *God to send*, and *to send for Peace* to his rebellious Footstool. Man could not have looked for Acceptance, before the Throne, if he had presented and sent first up Supplications and humble Cries to Heaven; and therefore finding himself miserable, you see he is at his Wits End, he is desperate, and gives it over, and so flies away to hide himself, certainly expecting that the first Message from Heaven should be to arm all the Creatures against him, to destroy him. But, O! what a wonderful, yet blessed Surprisal. God himself comes down, and not for any such Ends as Vengeance, though just, but to publish and hold forth a Covenant of Reconciliation and Peace, to convince Man of Sin, and to comfort him with the glad Tidings of a Redeemer, of one to be sent in the Likeness of Flesh. 'Tis the Grandeur and Majesty of Kings and great Men, to let others come to them with their Petitions; and 'tis a accounted a rare Thing if they be accessible and affable. But, that the *Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, who sitteth in the Circle of the Heavens, and before whom, all the Inhabitants of the Earth are as* poor *Grashoppers*, or crauling Worms, *about whose Throne, there are ten thousand Times ten thousand glorious Spirits ministring unto him*, as *Daniel* saw him, *chap.* vii. *ver.* 9, 10. that such a One, should not only admit, such as we, to come to him, and offer our Suits to his Highness, but himself first to come down unto *Adam*, and offer Peace to him, and then send his own Son: And what were we, that he should make any Motion about us, or make any Mission to us? *Rom* v. 10. *While we were yet Enemies*, that we were, when he sent: O! how hath his Love triumphed over his Justice! But, needed he fear our Enmity, that he should seek Peace? No ways; one Look of his angry Countenance, would have looked us unto nothing, *Thou lookest upon me, and I am not*; one *Rebuke of his for Iniquity, would have made our Beauty consume as the Moth*; far more the Stroke of his Hand had consumed us, *Psal.* xxxix. 11. But, that is the Wonder indeed, *while we were yet Enemies, and weak too*, neither able to help our selves, nor hurt him in the least, and so could do nothing to allure him, nothing to terrify him, nothing to engage his Love, nothing to make him fear; yet, then he makes this Motion and Mission to us, *God sending*, &c.

God sending, and *sending his own Son*, that is yet a Step higher: Had he sent an Angel, it had been wonderful, one of these *ministring Spirits* about the Throne being far more glorious than Man. But *God so loved the World, that he sent his Son*. Might he not have done it by others? But he had a higher Project; and verily, there is more Mystery in the End and Manner of our Redemption, than Difficulty in the Thing it self. No Question, he might have enabled the Creature, by his Almighty Power, to have destroyed the Works of the Devil, and might have delivered captive Man some other way; he needed not, for any Necessity lying upon him, gone such a round, as the Father to give to the Son, and the Son to receive; as God to send, and the Son to be sent; nay, he might have spared all Pains, and without any Messenger, immediately pardoned Man's Sin, and adopted him to the Place of Sons. Thus he had done the Business, without his Son's, or any others Travel and Labour in Blood and Suffering. But this profound Mystery, in the Manner of it, declares the Highness and Excellency of the

the End God propoſed, and that is the Manifeſtation of his Love. *Behold, what Manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed on us*, 1 Joh. iii, 1. And, *in this was manifeſted the Love of God, toward us, that God ſent his only begotten Son in to the World*, 1 Joh. iv. 9. And truly for ſuch a Deſign and Purpoſe, all the World could not have contrived ſuch a ſuitable and excellent Mean as this. Nothing beſides this could have declared ſuch Love; there is no Expreſſion of Love imaginable to this, *to give his Son*, and *only begotten Son for us*. It had been enough, out of meer Compaſſion, to have ſaved us, however it had been; but if he had given all, and done all beſides this, he had not ſo manifeſted the infinite Fulneſs of Love; there is no Gift ſo ſuitable to the Greatneſs and Magnificence of his Majeſty, as this, *One that thought it no Robbery to be equal with himſelf*. Any Gift had been infinitely above us, becauſe from him; but this is not only infinitely above us, but equal to himſelf, and fitteſt to declare himſelf.

But then, there is yet a higher Riſe of the Myſtery, or a lower Deſcent of God: For, 'tis all one, *God deſcending* is the Wonder aſcending, *he ſent his Son*; Man's Admiration is already exhauſted in that: But if there were any Thing behind, this which follows would conſume it, *in the Fleſh*. If he had ſent his own Son, might he not have ſent him in an Eſtate and Condition ſuitable to his Glory, as it became the *Prince and Heir of all Things, him by whom all were created and do ſubſiſt*: Nay, but he is ſent, and that in a State of Humiliation and Condeſcendency, infinitely below his own Dignity. That ever he was made a Creature, that the Maker of all ſhould be ſent in the Form of any Thing he had made, O! what a Diſparagement? There is no ſuch Diſtance between the higheſt Prince on the Throne, and the baſeſt Beggar on the Dunghill, as between the only begotten of the Father, who is *the Brightneſs of his Glory*, and the moſt glorious Angel that ever was made. And yet, it would be a Wonder to the World, if a King ſhould ſend his Son in the Habit and State of a Beggar, to call in the Poor, and Lame, and Blind, to the Fellowſhip of his Kingdom. It had been a great Myſtery then, if God had been manifeſted in the Nature of Angels, a great Abaſement of his Majeſty; But, O! what muſt it be for God, to be manifeſted in the Fleſh, in the baſeſt, naughtieſt, and moſt corruptible of all the Creatures, even the very Dregs of the Creation, that have ſunk down to the Bottom? *All Fleſh is Graſs*; and what more withering and fading, even the Flower and Perfection of it? *Iſa.* xl. 6. *Duſt* it is, and what baſer? *Gen.* xviii. 27. And *Corruption* it is, and what viler? 1 *Cor.* xv. 44. And yet, God ſent his Son in the Fleſh. Is this a Manifeſtation? Nay, rather, it is a Hiding and Obſcuration of his Glory; 'tis the putting on of a dark Vail to eclipſe his Brightneſs: Yet manifeſted he is, as the Intendment of the Work he was about required, manifeſted to Reproach and Ignominy for our Sin. This is one, and a great Point of Chriſt's Humiliation, that *he took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham*, Heb. ii. 16.

But yet, to compleat this Myſtery more, the Son deſcends a third Step lower, that the Myſtery may aſcend ſo much the higher; *in the Likeneſs of Fleſh*? not ſo, but *in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*. If he had appeared in the prime Flower and Perfection of Fleſh, in the

very Goodlineſs of it; yet it had been a Diſparagement; if he had come down as glorious as he once went up, and now *ſits at the right Hand of the Majeſty on high*; if he had been always in that reſplendent Habit, he put on, in his Transfiguration; that had been yet an Abaſement of his Majeſty: But, to come *in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, though not a Sinner, yet in the Likeneſs of a Sinner, ſo like, as touching his outward Appearance, that no Eye could diſcern any Difference, compaſſed about with all theſe Infirmities and Neceſſities, which are the Followers and Attendants of Sin in us; *a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Griefs*; a Man who all his Life-time had intimate Acquaintance, and Familiarity with Grief; Grief and he were long Acquaintance and never parted, till Death parted them: Nay, not only was he, in his outward Eſtate, ſubject to all theſe Miſeries and Infirmities, unto which Sin ſubjects other Men, but was ſomething beyond all, *his Viſage more marr'd than any Man's, and his Form more than the Sons of Men*, Iſa. lii. 14. and therefore, he was a *Hiſſing and Aſtoniſhment to many*; *he had no Form, nor Comelineſs in him, and no Beauty to make him deſirable*: And therefore, *his own Friends were aſhamed of him, and hid their Faces from him*; *he was deſpiſed and rejected of Men*, Iſa. liii 2, 3. Thus you ſee, he comes in the moſt deſpicable and diſgraceful Form of Fleſh that can be; and an Abject among Men; and as himſelf ſpeaks, in *Pſal.* xxii. 6. *a Worm, and not a Man, a Reproach of Men, and deſpiſed among the People*: Now, this, I ſay, is the Crowning of the great Myſtery of Godlineſs, which, without all Controverſy, is the Myſtery in all the World, that hath in it moſt Greatneſs and Goodneſs combined together, that is the Subject of the higheſt Admiration, and the Fountain of the ſweeteſt Conſolation, that either Reaſon or Religion can afford. The Myſteries of the Trinity are ſo high, that if any dares to reach at them, he doth but catch the lower Fall; it is, as if a Worm would attempt to touch the Sun in the Firmament. But this Myſtery is God coming down to Man, to be handled and ſeen of Men, becauſe Man could not riſe up to God's Highneſs; it is God deſcending to our Baſeneſs, and ſo coming near us, to ſave us. It is not a confounding, but a ſaving Myſtery; there is the higheſt Truth in it, for the Underſtanding to contemplate and admire, and there is the greateſt Good in it, for the Will to chooſe and reſt upon. 'Tis contrived for Wonder and Delight, to Men and Angels; theſe three, which the Angelick Song runs upon, are Jewels of it, *Glory to God, Peace on Earth, and Good-will towards Men.*

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SERMON XII.

Verſ. 3. *For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the Fleſh, God ſending his own Son,* &c.

OF all the Works of God towards Man, certainly there is none hath ſo much Wonder in it, as the ſending of his Son, to become Man, and ſo it requires the exacteſt Attention in us: Let us gather our Spirits to conſider of this Myſtery; not to pry into the Secrets of it curiouſly, as if we had no more to do, but to ſatisfy our Underſtandings; but rather that we may ſee what this concerns us, and what Inſtruction or Advantage we may have by it, that ſo it may raviſh our Affections. I believe, there is very palpable and groſs Ignorance in Thouſands of the very Thing it ſelf: Many who profeſs Jeſus Chriſt, know not his Natures, or his glorious Perſon, do not apprehend either his Highneſs as God or his Lowneſs as Man. But truly, the Thing that I do moſt admire, is, that theſe who pretend to more Knowledge of this Myſtery, yet few of them do enter upon any ſerious Conſideration about it, for what Uſe and Purpoſe it is, though it be the Foundation of our Salvation, the chief Ground of our Faith, and the great Spring of our Conſolation: Yet to improve the Knowledge of it to any Purpoſe of that Kind, is a Thing ſo rare, even among true Chriſtians, that it is little the Subject of their Meditation. I think indeed, the lively Improvement of this Myſtery of Godlineſs, would be very effectual to make us really what we are ſaid to be, that is, Chriſtians. There is ſomething to this Purpoſe, 1 *Joh.* iv. 2, 3, 15. and v. 1. The confeſſing and knowing that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh, and is the Son of God, before his taking on Fleſh, is made a Character of a ſpiritual Man that dwelleth in God. Not that a bare external Confeſſion, or internal Opinion and Aſſent to ſuch a Truth, is of ſo much Value, which yet is the Height that many attain unto, but it is ſuch a Soul-acknowledgment, ſuch an Heart-approbation of this Myſtery, as draws alongſt the Admiration and Affection after it, as fixeth the Heart upon this Object alone, for Life and Salvation. The *Devils confeſſed* and *believed*, but they *trembled at it*, Luke iv. 34, 41. He was afraid of what he knew, but *Peter* confeſſed and loved what he knew; yea, he did caſt his Soul upon that Lord whom he confeſſed. It is ſuch an Acknowledgment of Chriſt, as draweth the Soul, and unites it to him, by a ſerious and living Imbracement; ſuch a Sight of Jeſus Chriſt, hath both Truth and Goodneſs in it, in the higheſt Meaſure; and ſo doth not only conſtrain the Aſſent of the Mind, but is a powerful Attractive to the Heart, to come to him, and live in him. I pray you conſider

ſider then what Moment is in this Truth, that you may indeed apply your Souls to the Conſideration of what is in Jeſus Chriſt thus revealed, not ſimply to know it, but for a further Improvement of it, to ſeek life in Him, that the Stamp and Impreſſion of this Saviour may be ſet ſo deeply on your Souls, as that you may expreſs this in a real Confeſſion of him in your Words and Works, *Tit.* i. 16. *Matth.* vii. 21. This is indeed to know and confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh, to fetch thence the Ground of all our Hope and Conſolation, and to draw thence the moſt powerful Motives to walking, *even as he walked*, to improve it for Confidence in him, and Obedience to him.

I ſhall ſpeak then a Word of theſe two great Ends and Purpoſes, of God's ſending his own Son, *in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, his own Glory, and Mans Good.* The Song of Angels at his Birth ſhews this, *Glory to God in the Higheſt, Peace on Earth, and Good-will towards Man.* His Glory is manifeſted in it, in an eminent Manner, the Glory of his Wiſdom, that found out a Remedy. What a deep Contrivance was it? How infinitely beyond all Creature-inventions? Truly there are Riches of Wiſdom, Depths of Wiſdom in it. I think it could never have entred in the Thought of Men or Angels: All Men once to be drowned under a Deluge of Sin and Miſery, and made ſubject to God's righteous Judgment, and then to find out a Way how to deliver and ſave ſo many; all the Wiſdom that ſhines in the Order and Beauty of the World, ſeems to be but a rude Draught to this. Then, herein doth the Glory of his Mercy and Grace ſhine moſt brightly, that he transfers the Puniſhment due to Man's Sin, upon his own Son, that when no Ranſom could be found by Man, he finds it out, how to ſatisfy his own Juſtice, and ſave us. Truly, this is the moſt ſhining Jewel in the Crown of God's Glory, ſo much *Mercy* towards ſo miſerable *Sinners*, ſo much *Grace* towards the *Rebellious*. If he had pardoned Sin, without any Satisfaction, what rich Grace had it been? But truly, to provide the Lamb and Sacrifice himſelf, to find out the Ranſom, and to exact it of his own Son, in our Name, is a Teſtimony of *Mercy* and *Grace*, far beyond that. But then, his Juſtice is very conſpicuous in this Work; and indeed theſe two, do illuſtrate one another, the Juſtice of God, in taking and exacting the Puniſhment of Sin, upon his own well beloved Son, doth moſt eminently heighten the Mercy and Grace of God towards us; and his Grace and Mercy in paſſing by us, doth moſt marvellouſly illuſtrate the Righteouſneſs of God, in making his *own Son a Curſe for us*. What Teſtimony can be given in the World, of God's Diſpleaſure at Sin, of his Righteouſneſs in puniſhing Sin, like this? There was no ſuch Teſtimony of Love to Sinners, and no ſuch Demonſtration of Hatred at Sin imaginable. That he did not puniſh Sin in us, but transfers it over on the moſt beloved Son, O what *Love* and *Grace*; and that he did puniſh his own Son, when ſtanding in the Place of Sinners, O what *Righteouſneſs* and *Juſtice*. This is that glorious Myſtery, the Conjunction of theſe two reſplendent Jewels, *Juſtice* and *Mercy*, of *Love* and *Diſpleaſure*, in one Chain of Chriſt's Incarnation, *into which the Angels deſire to look*, 1 Pet. i. 12. And truly they do wonder at it, and praiſe from Wonder. This is it, that the Praiſes of Men and Angels ſhall roll about eternally. *David*, *Pſal.* ciii. 19. foreſeeing this Day, foretold

told it, that *Angels ſhould praiſe Him*, and now 'tis fulfiled, when all theſe glorious Companies of holy, powerful Spirits, welcome the Son of God into the World, by that heavenly Harmony of Praiſe, *Luke* ii. 14.

What Lumpiſhneſs and Earthlineſs is in us, that we do not riſe up above, to this Melody in our Spirits, to join with Angels in this Song; we, I ſay, whom it muſt concerns. The Angels wonder; and praiſes and wonders at this, becauſe the Glory of God ſhines ſo brightly in it, as if there were many Suns in one Firmament, as the Light of Seven Days in one. Theſe three eſpecially, Wiſdom, Mercy, and Grace, Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, every one of them look like the Sun in its Strength, caried about in this Orb of the Redemption of Man, to the raviſhing of the Hearts of all the honourable and glorious Compaines above, and making them chearfully and willingly to contribute all their Service to this Work, to be *miniſtring Spirits, to wait on the Heirs of Salvation.*

Now when the Glory of the Higheſt, raiſeth up ſuch a melodious Song above, among Angels, O what ſhould both the Glory of the higheſt *God*, and the higheſt *Good* of Man do to us! When the greateſt Glory of God, and the chiefeſt Advantage of Man are linked together in this Chain, what ſhould we do but admire and adore, adore and admire, and while we are in this Earth, ſend up our Conſent to that Harmony in Heaven?

In Relation to *our Good*, much might be ſaid, but we ſhall briefly ſhew unto you, that it is the greateſt Confirmation of our Faith, and the ſtrongeſt Motive to Humlility, that can be afforded. Now if we could be compoſed thus unto Confidence and Reverence, to glorify him by believing, and to abaſe our ſelves, to believe in him, and walk humbly with him, upon the Meditation of Chriſt's coming in the Fleſh, this would make us true Chriſtians indeed.

There is nothing I know, more powerful to perſwade us of the Reality of God's Invitations and Promiſes to us, than this. We are ſtill ſeeking Signs and Tokens of God's Love, ſomething to warrand us to come to God in Chriſt, and to perſwade that we ſhall be welcome; and many Chriſtians puddle themſelves in the Mire of their own Darkneſs and Diſcouragement, becauſe they cannot find any Thing in themſelves, that can give but the leaſt probable Conjecture, that he will admit and welcome them to come to him, or that ſuch precious Promiſes, and ſweet Invitations, can belong to ſuch Sinners, as they conceive themſelves to be. Truly, my Beloved, I think, while we exerciſe ourſelves thus, we are ſeeking the Sun with a Candle, making that which is in itſelf as bright as the Light to be more dark. The Evidence of God's Reality, in offering Life to you in Chriſt, and his Willingneſs to receive you, it is not without the Compaſs of his Invitation, and yet you ſeek it where it is leaſt to be found, that is, in your ſelves: But indeed, his Invitations in the Goſpel, carry the Evidence in their Boſom, that which is above all other Signs and Evidences, that he did even ſend his own Son in the Fleſh for this Purpoſe; is there any Thing beſides this, either greater, or clearer? I think we are like theſe, who, when they had ſeen many Signs and Wonders done by Chriſt, which did bear Teſtimony to all the World of his Divine Nature, yet they would not be ſatisfied, but ſought out another *Sign, tempting him*, Mat. xvi. 1. And truly, he might return this

Anſwer:

Anſwer to us, *O wicked and adulterous Generation, that ſeeketh after a Sign, there ſhall no Sign be given to thee, but the Sign of the Prophet Jonas.* The greateſt Teſtimony that can be imagined, is given already, that the Father ſhould ſend his *only begotten and well beloved Son*, into this *State of a Servant*, for Man: If this do not ſatisfy, I know not what will. I ſee not how any Work of his Spirit in us, can make ſo much Evidence of his Reality, and Faithfulneſs in the Goſpel, and of his Willingneſs to welcome Sinners. All the Works of the Creation, all the Works of Grace, are nothing to this, to manifeſt his Love to Men; and therefore there is a ſingular Note upon it, *God ſo loved the World, that he ſent his Son*, Joh. iii. 16. *And in this was Love manifeſted, that he gave his Son*, 1 Joh. iv. 9. If Men and Angels had ſet themſelves to deviſe and find out a Pledge or Confirmation of the Love of God, they would have fallen upon ſome Revelation unto, or ſome Operation upon their Spirits; but alas, this is infinitely above that, *his own expreſs Image, and the Brightneſs of his Glory*, is come down to bear Witneſs of his Love: nay, he who is *equal* with himſelf in Glory, is given as a Gift to Men, and is not he infinitely more than created Gifts, or Graces, who is the very Spring and Fountain of them all? *God ſo loved the World*, that truly he gave no ſuch Gift beſides, to teſtify ſuch a Love: Therefore, when all that he hath done in this Kind, cannot ſatisfy thy ſcrupulous Mind, but thou wilt ſtill go on, to ſeek more Confirmation of his Readineſs to receive thee, I think it is a *tempting of the Holy One*, which may draw ſuch an Anſwer from him, O wicked and adulterous Perſon, there ſhall no *Sign be given* thee, but that which is darker than the former, that which thou ſhalt underſtand leſs; thou may get what thou ſeeks, perhaps ſome more Satisfaction in thy own Condition, but it ſhall plung thee more in the Iſſue; thou ſhall always be unſettled and *unconſtant as Water, thou ſhalt not excell.* I confeſs indeed, if we ſpeak of the Manifeſtation of One's particular Intereſt in theſe Promiſes, and of an Evidence of the Love of God to thee, in particular, then there muſt needs be ſomething wrought by the Holy Spirit, on thy Soul, to draw down the general Teſtimony of God's Love to Mankind, into a particular Application to thy ſelf. But, that I do not ſpeak of now, becauſe that is the Sealing of the Spirit after believing; and becauſe you are always unſettled in the firſt, and main Point, of flying unto the Son, and waiting on him for Life, therefore have you ſo much Inevidence and Weakneſs in that which follows. That which I now ſpeak of, is, that if this were cordially believed, and ſeriouſly conſidered, that *God ſent his own Son in the Fleſh, to ſave Sinners*, you could not readily have any Doubt, but that you coming to him for Salvation, would be welcome, you could not ſay, that ſuch precious Invitations could not belong to Sinners, or that he could not love the like of you. Truly, I think, if the general were laid to Heart, that God hath ſo loved Mankind, that he gave ſuch a Gift unto them, there is none could make any more Queſtion of his Reality, when that Gift is tendered to any in particular. Nay, I think it is the Inconſideration of this general Evidence and Manifeſtation of Love to the World, that makes you ſo perplexed in Particulars. Could you have ſo much Difficulty to believe his Love to you, if you indeed believe that he hath loved the World, that

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is, ſo many Thouſands like you? Is there ſo much Diſtance, I pray you, between you and another, as between him and all? If then he loves ſo many miſerable Sinners, is there any Impoſſibility in it, but he may love you? For what is in them, that might conciliate his Love? I tell you, why I think the right Apprehenſion of the general Truths of the Goſpel would be able, like the Sun in its Strength, to ſcatter all the Clouds and Miſts of our particular Intereſt-debates; becauſe I find, that theſe very Grounds, upon which you call in Queſtion your own particular Intereſt, if you did conſider them, you would find they go a further Length, to conclude againſt all others; and either they have no Strength in your Caſe, or they will be of equal Force to batter down the Confidence of all the Saints, and the Certainty of all the Promiſes. What is it that troubles you, but that you are Sinners, and ſuch Sinners, ſo vile, and loathſome? From whence you do conclude, not only, that you have no preſent Aſſurance of his Love, but that he cannot love ſuch a one as you are. Now, I ſay, if this hold good, in Reference to you, take heed that *you condemn not your ſelves in that which you approve*, that is, that you do not diſpute againſt the Intereſt of all the Saints, who were ſuch as you are, and the Truth of theſe fundamental Poſitions of the Goſpel, *God ſo loved the World*, &c. And ſo you do not only wrong your ſelves, but all others; and not only ſo, but you offer the greateſt Indignity to him, that out of Love ſent his Son, and to him, who out of Love, came and laid down his Life. O conſider how you indignify and ſet at nought that great Manifeſtation of God's Love, *God manifeſted in the Fleſh*; how you deſpiſe his Love-pledge to Sinners, a greater than which he could not give you, becauſe as great as himſelf. O that you could ſee the Conſequence of your anxious and perplexing Doubts, that they do not only an Injury to your own Souls, but they are of a more bloody Nature; if they hold good, they would cut off the Life and Salvation of all Believers, and, which is worſe, they will by an unavoidable Conſequence, conclude an antichriſtian Point, that Chriſt is not come in the Fleſh; I beſeech you unbowel your Evils, that you may abhor them.

This may ſtrengthen our Faith, and miniſter much Conſolation, in another Conſideration too; that which is laid down *Heb.* ii. 17. and iv. 15. that he was *Partaker of our Nature*, and *in all Things like unto his Brethren, that ſo he might be a merciful High-prieſt, able to ſuccour us, and touched with the feeling of our Infirmities*. What ſtrong Conſolation may be ſuckt out of theſe Breaſts? When it was impoſſible that Man could riſe up to *God*, becauſe of his infinite Highneſs, and Holineſs, behold, *God* hath come down to *Man*, in his Lowneſs, and Baſeneſs; he hath ſent down this Ladder from Heaven to the Earth, that poor wretched Sinners may aſcend upon it; it is come down, as low as our infirm, weak and frail Nature, that we may have eaſy coming up to it, and going up upon it to Heaven: Therefore his Fleſh is called, a *new and living Way*, becauſe a poor Sinner may be aſſured of Welcome, and Acceptation with one of his own Kind, his *Brother*, (*he was not aſhamed to call us Brethren,*) *Fleſh of his Fleſh, and Bone of his Bone*. This may *make Boldneſs of Acceſs*, that we have not God to ſpeak to, or come to, immediately, as he is cloathed with Glory and Majeſty, and as the *Jews* heard him

on Mount *Sinai*, and desired a Mediator between him and them; but that, that great Prophet promised to them, hath come, and we have him between us and God, as low as we, that we may speak to him, *riding upon an Ass, a low Ass*, that every one may whisper their Desires in his Ear, and yet as high as God, that he may speak to God, and have Power with him. Truly this is a sweet trysting Place, to meet God in, that no Sinner may have any Fear to come to it, to this Treaty of Peace and Reconciliation. How may it perswade us of that great Privilege, that we may *become the Sons of God*, when *the Son of God is become the Son of Man*, Joh. i. 11, 12. Truly, though it be hard to be believed, that such as we should become *the Sons of the great King*; yet it is nothing so strange as this, that *the eternal and only begotten Son of the great God*, should become *the Son of wretched Man*; that Highness will be easily believed, if we consider this Lowness. It will not be so hard to perswade a Soul, that there is a Way of Union and Reconciliation to God, of being yet at Peace with him, if this be pondered, that God hath married his own Nature with ours, in one Person, to be a Pledge of that Union and Peace. And then, how much quickening and Comfort may it yield us, that he was not only a Man, but a miserable Man, and that not through any Necessity of Love and Compassion? He had enough of Mercy to save us as God, he had enough of Love and Compassion as Man; but he would take on Misery too, in his own Person, that he might be experimentally merciful to us. Certainly, the Experience of Misery and Infirmity, must superadd some Tenderness, to the Heart of our *High-priest*: But though it did not help him to be more pitiful, yet it was done for us, to help us to have more Confidence in him, and Boldness to come unto him. What an Encouragement is it for a poor Man to come unto (once) poor Jesus Christ, who *had not where to lay his Head?* He knows the Evil of Poverty, and he chooseth to know it, that he might have Compassion on thee. With what Boldness may poor afflicted and despised Believers come to him? Why? because, he himself had Experience of all that, and he was familiarly acquainted with Grief and Sorrow, therefore he can sympathize best with thee. Let us speak even of sinful Infirmities thou art subject to, that there might be a Suitableness in him to help thee, he came as nigh as might be, he was willing to be tempted to Sin, and so he knows the Power that Temptations must have over weak and frail Natures; but sin he could not, for that had been Evil for us. Let this then give us Boldness to come to him.

I would desire to perswade you to Humility from this, according to the Lesson Christ gives us, *Matth.* xi. 29. *Learn of me, I am meek and lowly.* And the Apostle makes singular Use of this Mystery of the Abasement of the Majesty, to abate from our high Esteem of our selves, *Phil.* ii. 3, 4, 5, 6. *O should not the same Mind be in us, that was in Christ. God abased, Man exalted*, how unsuitable are these think you? God lowly in Condition and Disposition, and Man, though base in Condition, yet high in his Disposition, and in his own Estimation: What more mysterious, than God humbled? And what more monstrous, than Man proud? Truly, Pride it is the most deformed Thing in a Man, but in a Christian, it

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is monſtrous and prodigious. If he did humble himſelf out of Charity and Love, who was ſo high and glorious, how ſhould we humble our ſelves out of Neceſſity, who are ſo low and baſe? And out of Charity and Love too, to be conformed and like unto him? Nature may perſwade the one, but Chriſtianity teacheth the other, to be lowly in Mind, and eſteem every one better than our ſelves. To be meek, patient, Long-ſuffering, Reaſon may perſwade it, upon the Conſideration of our own Baſeneſs, Emptineſs, Frailty, and Nothingneſs. But this Leſſon is taught in Chriſt's School, not from that Motive only, the Force of Neceſſity, but from a higher Motive, the *Conſtraint of Love* to Jeſus Chriſt: *Learn of me.* Suppoſe there were no Neceſſity of Reaſon in it, yet Affection might be a ſtronger Neceſſity, to perſwade Conformity to him, and following his Example, who became ſo low, and *humbled himſelf to the Death, even for us.*

SERMON XIII.

Ver. 3. ——*And for Sin condemned Sin in the Fleſh.*

THE great and wonderful Actions of great and excellent Perſons, muſt needs have ſome great Ends anſwerable to them. Wiſdom will teach them not to do ſtrange Things, but for ſome rare Purpoſes; for it were a Folly and Madneſs to do great Things, to compaſs ſome ſmall and petty End, as unſuitable as that a Mountain ſhould travel to bring forth a Mouſe. Truly we muſt conceive, that it muſt needs be ſome honourable and high Buſineſs, that brought down ſo high and honourable a Perſon from Heaven, as the Son of God; it it muſt be ſomething proportioned to his Majeſty and his Wiſdom; and indeed ſo it is. There is a great capital Enemy againſt God in the World, that is Sin; this arch Rebel hath drawn Man from his Subordinaton to God, and ſown a perpetual Diſcord and Enmity between them; this hath conquered all Mankind, and among the reſt, even the Elect and Choſen of God, theſe whom God had in his eternal Council predeſtinated to Life and Salvation; Sin brings all in Bondage, and exerciſeth the moſt perfect Tyranny over them, that can be imagined; makes Men to ſerve all its imperious Luſts, and then all the Wages is Death, it binds them over to Judgment. Now this Sedition and Rebellion being ariſen in the World, and one of the moſt noble Creatures carried away in this Revolt, from Allegiance to the Divine Majeſty; the moſt holy and wiſe Council of Heaven concludes to ſend the King's Son, to compeſce this rebellion, to reduce Men again unto Obedience, and to deſtroy that arch Traitor, *Sin*, which his Nature moſt abhors. And for this End the Son of the great King, Jeſus Chriſt, came down into the World, to deliver captive Man, and to condemn conquering Sin. There is no Object that God hath ſo pure and perfect Diſpleaſure at, as Sin; therefore he ſent to condemn

that which he hates moſt, and perfectly he hates it, to *condemn Sin*; and this is expreſſed as the Earrnd of his coming, 1 *Joh.* iii. 5, 8. *to deſtroy the Works of the Devil*; all his wicked and helliſh Plots and Contrivances againſt Man, all that Poiſon of Enmity and Sin, that out of Envy and Malice he ſpued out upon Man, and inſtilled into his Nature; all theſe Works of that Prince of Darkneſs, in enticing Man from Obedience to Rebellion, and tyrannizing over him ſince, by the imperious Laws of his own Luſts; in a Word, all that Work that was contrived in Hell, to bring poor Man down to that ſame Miſery with Devils; all that Chriſt the only begotten Son of the great King, came (for this noble Buſineſs) to deſtroy it: That Tower which Satan was building up againſt Heaven, and had laid the Foundation of it as low as Hell, this was Chriſt's Buſineſs, down among Men, to deſtroy that *Babylon*, that Tower of Darkneſs and Confuſion, and to build up a Tower of Light and Life, to which Tower, Sinners might come, and be ſafe, and by which they might really aſcend into Heaven. Some do, by theſe Words, *for Sin*, underſtand the Occaſion and Reaſon of Chriſt's coming, that it was, becauſe Sin had conquered the World, and ſubjected Man to Condemnation; therefore Jeſus Chriſt came into the World, to conquer Sin, and condemn it, that we might be free from Condemnation by Sin. And this was the ſpecial Cauſe of his taking on *Fleſh*. If Sin had not entered in the World, Chriſt had not come into it; and if Sin had not erected a Throne in Man's Fleſh, Chriſt had not taken on Fleſh, he had not come in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh: So that this may adminiſter unto us abundant Conſolation. If this was the very Cauſe of his coming, that which drew him down from that delightful and bleſſed Boſom of the Father, then he will certainly do that which he came for; he cannot fail of his Purpoſe, he cannot miſs his End: he muſt *condemn Sin*, and ſave Sinners. And truely this is wonderful Love, that he took *Sin* only for his Party, and came only for *Sin*, or againſt Sin, and not againſt poor Sinners: He had no Commiſſion of the Father, but this, as himſelf declares, *Joh.* iii. 17. For, *God ſent not his Son into the World, to condemn the World, but that the World through him might be ſaved.* As one obſerves well, Chriſt would never have hinted at ſuch a Jealouſy, or ſuggeſted ſuch a Thought to Mens Minds, had it not been in them before; but this we are naturally inclined unto, to think hard of God, and can hardly be perſwaded of his Love, when once we are perſwaded of our Enmity. Indeed the moſt Part of the World fancy a Perſwaſion of God's Love, and have not many Jealouſies of it, becauſe they know not their own Enmity againſt God; but let a Man ſee himſelf indeed God's Enemy, and it is very hard to make him believe any other Thing of God, but that he carries a hoſtile Mind againſt him; and therefore Chriſt, to take off this, perſwades and aſſures us, that neither the Father nor he had any Deſign upon poor Sinners, nor any Ambuſhment againſt them, but mainly, if not only, this was his Purpoſe in ſending, and Chriſt's in coming, not againſt Man, but againſt *Sin*, not to condemn Sinners, but to condemn *Sin*, and ſave Sinners. O bleſſed and unparallel'd Love! that made ſuch a real Diſtinction between Sin and Sinners, who were ſo really one. Shall not we be content to have that woful and accurſed Union with Sin diſſolved? Shall not we be willing to let Sin be condemned in

in us, and to have our own Souls ſaved? I beſeech you, Beloved in the Lord, do not think to maintain always Chriſt's Enemy, that great Traitor, againſt which he came from Heaven: Wonder that he doth not proſecute both as Enemies; but if he will deſtroy the one, and ſave the other, O let it be deſtroyed, not you; and ſo much the more, for that it will deſtroy you: Look to him, ſo *Iniquity ſhall not be your Ruine*, but he ſhall be the Ruine of Iniquity; but if you will not admit of ſuch a Diviſion between you and your Sins, take heed that you be not eternally undivided, that you have not one common Lot for ever, that is, *Condemnation*. Many would be ſaved, but they would be be ſaved with Sin too; Alas! that will condemn thee. As for Sin, he hath proclaimed irreconcileable Enmity againſt it, he hath no Quarter to give it, he will never come in Terms of Compoſition with it, and all becauſe it is *his* mortal Enemy; therefore let Sin be condemned, that thou may be ſaved. It cannot be ſaved with thee, but thou may be condemned with it.

The Word, *for Sin*, may be taken in another Senſe as fitly, *a Sacrifice for Sin*; ſo that the Meaning is, Jeſus Chriſt came to condemn and overthrow Sin, in its Plea againſt us, by a Sacrifice *for Sin*, that is, by offering up his own Body or Fleſh. And thus, you have the Way and Means how Chriſt conquered Sin, and accompliſhed the Buſineſs he was ſent for. It was by offering a Sacrifice for Sin, to expiate Wrath, and to ſatisfy Juſtice: *The Sting and Strength of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks it, 1. *Cor.* xv. 55. We had two great Enemies againſt us, two great Tyrants over us, Sin and Death. Death had paſt upon all Mankind, not only the Miſeries of this Life and temporal Death had ſubjected all Men, but the Fear of an eternal Death, of an everlaſting Separation from the bleſſed Face of God, might have ſeized upon all, and ſubjected them to Bondage, *Heb.* ii. 15. But *the Strength and Sting of that is Sin*; it is Sin that arms Death and Hell againſt us, take away Sin, and you take away the Sting, the Strength of Death, it hath no Force or Power to hurt Man, but *Death, being the Wages due for Sin*, Rom. vi. 23. All the Certainty and Efficacy in the Wages, flows from this Work of Darkneſs, Sin. But, *Now the Strength of Sin is the Law*; this puts a poiſonable and deſtructive Vertue in the Sting of Sin, for it is the Sentence of God's Law, and the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of God, that hath made ſo inſeparable a Connection between Sin and Death; this gives Sin a deſtroying and killing Vertue. Juſtice arms it with Power and Authority, to condemn Man, ſo that there can be no Freedom, no Releaſement from that Condemnation, no eſchewing that fatal Sting of Death, unleſs the Sentence of God's Law, which hath pronounced, *thou ſhalt die*, be repealed, and the Juſtice of God be ſatisfied by a Ranſom. And this being done, the Strength of Sin is quite gone, and ſo the Sting of Death removed.

Now this had been impoſſible for Man to do, theſe Parties were too ſtrong for any created Power, the Strength of Sin to condemn may be called ſome way infinite, becauſe it flows from the unchangeable Law of the infinite Juſtice of God. Now, what Power could encounter that Strength, except that which hath infinite Strength too? Therefore, it behoved the Son of God, to come for this Buſineſs, to condemn Sin, and ſave the Sinner. And being come, he yokes firſt with the very

very Strength of Sin, for he knew where its Strength did ly, and so did encounter, first of all, with that, even the Justice of his Father, *The Hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us*; for if once he can set them aside, as either vanquished or satisfied, he hath little else to do. Now, he doth not take a violent Way in this either, he doth it not with the strong Hand, but deals wisely, and (to speak so with Reverence) cunningly in it, *he came under the Law, that he might redeem them who were under the Law*, Gal. iv. 4. Force will not do it, the Law cannot be violated, Justice cannot be compelled to forego its Right; therefore, our Lord Jesus chooseth, as it were, to compound with the Law, to submit unto it, *He was made under the Law*, he who was above the Law, being *Law-giver in Mount Sinai*, Acts vii. 38. Gal. iii. 19. He cometh under the Bond and Tye of it, *to fulfil it. I came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*, Mat. v. 17. He would not offer Violence to the Law, to deliver Sinners, contrary to the Commination of it, or without Satisfaction given unto it, for, that would reflect upon the Wisdom and Righteousness of the Father who gave the Law: But he doth it better, in an amicable Way, by Submission and Obedience to all its Demands; whatsoever it craved of the Sinner he fulfils that Debt, he satisfies the Bond, in his own Person, by suffering, and fulfils all the Commandments by Obedience: And thus, by Subjection to the Law, he gets Power over the Law, because his Subjection takes away all its Claim and Right over us; therefore, it is said, that *he blotted out the Hand-writing of Ordinances, which was against us, by nailing it to his Cross, and so took it out of the Way*, Col. ii. 14. Having fulfilled the Bond, he cancell'd it, and so it stands in no Force, either against him or us; thus, *the Strength of Sin, which is the Law*, is removed, and by this Means, *Sin is condemned in the Flesh, by the suffering of his Flesh*, it is fallen from all its Plea against Sinners; for, that upon which it did hang, *viz.* the Sentence of the Law, is taken out of the Way, so that it hath no apparent Ground to fasten any Accusation upon a poor Sinner, that flies into Jesus Christ, and no Ground at all to condemn him, it is wholly disabled in that Point; for, as the the *Philistines* found where *Samson's* Strength lay, and cutted his Hair, so Christ hath in his Wisdom found where the Sin's Plea, against Man lay, and hath cutted off the Hair of it, that is, *the Hand-writing of Ordinances which was against us*.

This is that which hath been shadowed out, from the Beginning of the World, by the Types of Sacrifices and Ceremonies: All these Offerings of Beasts, of Fowls, and such like, under the Law, held forth this one Sacrifice, that was offered *in the Fulness of Time, to be a Propitiation for the Sins of the World*; and something of this was used among the *Gentiles*, before Christ's coming, certainly by Tradition from the Fathers, who have looked afar off to this Day, when this *sweet smelling Sacrifice* should be offered up to appease Heaven. And it is not without a special Providence, and worthy the remarking, that since the plenary and substantial One was offered, the Custom of sacrificing hath ceased throughout the World; God, as it were, proclaiming to all Men by this Cessation of Sacrifices, as well as Silence of Oracles, that the true *Atonement and Propitiation* is come already, and the *true Prophet* is come from Heaven, to reveal God's

God's Mind unto the World. There were many Ceremonies in ſacrificing obſerved to hold out unto us the Perfection of our Atonement and Propitiation: They *laid their Hands* on the Beaſt, who brought it, to ſignify the Imputation of our Sins to Chriſt, that *he who knew no Sin, was made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.* And truly it is worth the Obſervation, that even thoſe Sacrifices for Sin were called *Sin*, and ſo the Word is uſed promiſcuouſly in *Leviticus*, to point out unto us, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould make *his Soul Sin*, Iſa. liii. 10. that is, a Sacrifice for Sin, and be *made Sin for us*, that is, a Sacrifice for Sin. When the Blood was poured out (*becauſe without ſhedding of Blood, no Reconciliation*, Heb. x.) *the Prieſt ſprinkled it ſeven Times before the Lord*, to ſhadow out the Perfection of that Expiation for our Sins, in the Vertue and Perpetuity thereof, *Heb.* ix. 26, that he ſhould appear, *to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*; to put it away, as if it had never been, by taking it on him, and bearing it: And then the High-prieſt was to bring in of the Blood into the *holy Place*, and *within the Vail*, and *ſprinkle the Mercy-ſeat*, to ſhew unto us, that the Merit and Efficacy of Chriſt's Blood, ſhould enter into the higheſt Heavens, to appeaſe the Wrath of God. Our High-prieſt by his own Blood hath *entered into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us*, Heb. ix. 12. And truly this is that Sacrifice, which being offered without Spot to God, pacifies all, *ver.* 14. Sin hath a Cry, cryeth aloud for Vengeance; this Blood ſilenceth it, and compoſeth all to Favour and Mercy. It hath ſo ſweet and fragrant a Smell in God's Account, that it fills Heaven with the Perfume of it. He is that true *Scape-goat*, who, notwithſtanding that he did bear all the Sins of his People, yet he did eſcape alive, albeit he behoved to make his Soul a Sacrifice for Sin, and ſo die for it; yet by this Means he hath *condemned Sin*, by being *condemned for Sin*; by this Means he hath overcome Death and the Grave, by coming under the Power of Death, and ſo is now alive for ever, to improve his Victory for our Salvation; and by taking on our Sins, he hath fully aboliſhed the Power and Plea of them, as the Goat that was ſent to the Wilderneſs out of all Mens Sight, was not to be ſeen again. Truly this is the Way how our Sins are buried in the Grave of Oblivion, and removed as a Cloud, and caſt into the Depths of the Sea, and ſent away as far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt, that they may never come in Judgment againſt us, to condemn us, becauſe Chriſt, by appeaſing Wrath, and ſatisfying Juſtice by the Sacrifice of himſelf, hath overthrown them in Judgment, and buried them in the Grave *with his own Body*.

You ſee then, my Beloved, a ſolid Ground of Conſolation againſt all our Fears and Sorrows, an Anſwer to all the Accuſations of our Sins, here is one for all, one above all. You would have particular Anſwers to ſatisfy your particular Doubts, you are always ſeeking ſome Satisfaction to your Conſciences beſides this; but believe it, all that can be ſaid beſides this Atonement and Propitiation, is of no more Vertue to purge your Conſciences, or ſatisfy your perplexed Souls, than theſe repeated Sacrifices of old were. Whatſoever you can pitch upon beſides this, it is inſufficient; and therefore you find a Neceſſity of ſeeking ſome other Grace or Qualification to appeaſe your Conſciences, even as they had need to multiply Sacrifices;

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ut now, since this perfect and full Propitiation is offered up for our Sins, should not all these vain Expiations of your own Works cease? Truly there is nothing can pacify Heaven but this, and nothing can appease thy Conscience on Earth, but this too. If you find any Accusation against you, consider, Christ hath by a *Sacrifice for Sin, condemned Sin in his own Flesh*; the Marks of the *Spear*, of the *Nails*, of the *Buffettings* of *his Flesh*, these are the Tokens and Pledges, that he encountred with the Wrath due to your Sins, and so hath cut off all the Right that Sin hath over you. If thou can unfeignedly, in the Lord's Sight, say, that it is thy Soul's Desire to be delivered from Sin, as well as Wrath, thou would gladly fly from *Condemnation*; then come to him who hath *condemned Sin*, by suffering the Condemnation of Sin, that he might save these who desire to fly from it to him.

SERMON XIV.

Vers. 4. *That the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us*, &c.

GOD having a great Design to declare unto the World, both his Justice and Mercy towards Men, he found out this Mean most suitable and proportioned unto it, which is here spoken of in the 3. *ver.* to send his own Son, to bear the Punishment of Sin, that the *Righteousness of the Law* might be freely and graciously *fulfilled* in Sinners. And indeed it was not imaginable by us, how he could declare both, in the Salvation of Sinners. We could not have found out a Way to declare his Righteousness and Holiness, which would not have obscured his Mercy and Grace, nor a Way to manifest his Grace and Mercy, which would not have reflected upon his Holiness and Justice, according to the Letter of the Law that was given out, as the Rule of Life, *He that doth them shall live in them*, and *cursed is every one that doth them not*, &c. What could we expect, if this be fulfilled (as it would appear, God's Truth and Holiness requires?) then we are gone, no Place for Mercy, if this be not fulfilled, (that the Mercy may be shewed in pardoning Sin) then the Truth and Faithfulness of God seems to be impaired. This is the Strait that all Sinners would have been into, if God had not found such an Enlargement as this, how to shew Mercy, without wronging Justice, and how to save Sinners, without impairing his Faithfulness. Truly we may wonder, what was it that could straiten his Majesty so, that he must *send his own Son, so beloved* of him, *and bruise* him, and hide his *Face* from him, yea, and torment him, and *not let the Cup pass from him*, for any Intreaties; might he not more easily have never added such a Commination to the Law, *thou shalt die*; or more easily

eaſily relaxed and repealed that Sentence, and paſt by the Sinner, without any more, than exacted ſo heavy a Puniſhment from one that was innocent? Was it the Satisfaction of his Juſtice that ſtraitned him, and put a Neceſſity of this upon him? But truly it ſeems it had been no more contrary to Righteouſneſs to have paſt over the Sinner, without Satisfaction, than to require and take it off one who was not really guilty? The Truth is, it was not ſimply the indiſpenſible Neceſſity of ſatisfying Juſtice, that put him upon ſuch an hard and unpleaſant Work, as the *bruiſing of his own Son*; for, no doubt, he might have as well diſpenſed with all Satisfaction, as with the perſonal Satisfaction of the Sinner; but here the Strait lay, and here was the Urgency of the Caſe, he had a Purpoſe to declare his Juſtice, and therefore a Satisfaction muſt be had, not ſimply to ſatisfy Righteouſneſs, but rather *to declare his Righteouſneſs*, Rom. iii. 25. Now indeed to make theſe two ſhine together, in one Work of the Salvation of Sinners, all the World could not have found out the like of this; to diſpenſe with perſonal Satisfaction in the Sinner, which the Rigour of the Law required, and ſo to admit a ſweet Moderation and Relaxation, that the Riches of his Grace and Mercy might be manifeſted, and yet withal, to exact the ſame Puniſhment of another, willingly coming in the Sinners Place, to the End that all Sinners may behold his Righteouſneſs and Juſtice: And ſo this Work of the Redemption of Sinners, hath theſe Names of God publiſhed by himſelf, *Exod.* xxxiv. 6, 7. to *Moſes*, engraven deeply upon it, Mercy and Goodneſs ſpelled out at length in it, for Love was the Riſe of all, and Love did run alongſt in all; yet ſo, as there is Room to ſpeak out his Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, and Juſtice, not ſo much to affright Sinners, as to make his Mercy the more amiable and wonderful.

I know not a more preſſing Ground of ſtrong Conſolation, nor a firmer Bulwark of our Confidence and Salvation, than this Conjunction of Mercy and Juſtice in the Buſineſs: There might have been always a ſecret Hink of Jealouſy and Suſpicion in our Minds, when God publiſheth Mercy and Forgiveneſs to us freely. O! how ſhall the Law be ſatisfied, and the Importunity of Juſtice and Faithfulneſs, that hath pronounced a Sentence of Death upon us, anſwered? Shall not the righteous Law be a Loſer this Way, if I be ſaved, and it not ſatisfied by Obedience or Suffering? How hard would it be to perſuade a Soul of free Pardon, that ſees ſuch a ſevere Sentence ſtanding againſt it? But now there is no Place for doubting, all is contrived for the Encouragement and Happineſs of poor Sinners, that we may come to him with full Perſuaſion of his Readineſs and Inclinableneſs to Pardon, ſince Jeſus Chriſt hath taken the Law and Juſtice of God off our Head, and us off their Hand; and ſince he hath reckoned with them, for what is due by us, and payed it without us, then we have a clear Way, and ready Acceſs to Pardon, and to believe his Readineſs to pardon. And this is it which is holden out here, *Chriſt condemning Sin in the Fleſh*, or puniſhing Sin in his own *Fleſh*, giving a viſible and ſenſible Repreſentation of the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of God, in puniſhing Sin, and that in his own *Fleſh*, offering up himſelf as the condemned Sinner, and hanging up to the View of all the World, as an evident Teſtimony of the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of God againſt Sin, and by this Means cutting off the very Strength of Sin, the *Law*, by

fulfilling it. In Christ's Sufferings you may behold, as in a clear Mirror, the Hatred and Displeasure of God against Sin, the Righteousness of God in punishing Sin, *Him hath God set forth to the World to be a Propitiation, to declare the Righteousness of God*, Rom. iii. 24, 25. In this *crucified* Lord, you may behold the sensible Image, and the most lively Demonstration of Holiness and Righteousness; Christ's Flesh bare the Marks of both, Holiness in hating Sin, Righteousness in punishing it, and both in his beloved and only begotten Son's Person, in his *Flesh*; and all for this Purpose, that the Law might be no Loser by our Salvation, *That the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us*, &c.

This is that which Christ says, *I came not to destroy the Law*, but *to fulfil it*; and which *Paul* seconds, *Is the Law then made void by Faith, God forbid*, it is *rather established*, Mat. v. 17. Rom. iii. 31. The Law and Justice comes better to their own, by our Cautioner, than by us; there is no such Way conceivable, to satisfy them fully, as this, whether you look to the Commandment or the Curse.

The Commandment never got such Satisfaction in any Person, as in Christ's, he hath fulfilled it by Obedience. *It becomes us*, saith he, *to fulfil all Righteousness*, Mat. iii. 15. both moral and ceremonial; so that *there was no Guile found in his Mouth, he knew no Sin, he was Holy and Harmless: His Father's Will was his Soul's Delight, I delight to do thy Will*, Psal. xl. 8. *It was more to him than his necessary Food, his Meat and Drink*. There was so absolute a Correspondency between his *Will* and God's *Will*, and between his Way and his Will, that it was not possible that any Difference should fall between them. His Obedience had more Good in it (so to speak) than *Adam*'s Disobedience had Evil in it, *Rom.* v. 18, 19. *Adam*'s Disobedience was but the Sin of a finite Creature, but Christ's Obedience was the Work of an infinite Person. I think there was more real Worth in Christ's Obedience to the Commands, than in all the united Service and Obedience of Men and Angels, all the Love, Delight, Fear and Obedience flowing from these, take them in one Bundle, as they will be extended and multiplied to all Eternity; there is something in Christ's that elevates it above all, and puts a higher Price upon it, the transcendant Dignity of his Person, his own Son, *made under the Law*, Gal. iv. 4. That is more Worth than if all Men and Angels had been *made under it*. It had been no Humiliation, but rather the Exaltation of an Angel, to be obedient to God, that Subordination to a Law, is the highest Top of the Creature's Advancement: But he was such a Person, as his Obedience was a humbling himself, *He humbled himself, and became obedient, even to the Death*, Phil. ii. 8. *And though he was the Son of God, yet he stooped to learn Obedience*, Heb. v. 8. Now indeed the Commandment comes to it better, by this Means, to have such a glorious Person under it, than if it had poor naughty *us* under it; and that it is fulfilled by him, when otherwise it would never have been done. I suppose that Justice had exacted the Punishment of us, as we could never have ended Suffering to all Eternity, so we would never have begun new Obedience to the Command to all Eternity; thus, except Christ had taken it off us, and us off its Hand, it should never have been fulfilled, since it was first broken. Next, the Curse of the Law could not get fuller Satisfaction, than in Christ: I suppose, *It* had

had fallen upon the Sinner, there is not so much Worth in the Creatures extreamest Sufferings, as to compensate the infinite Wrongs done to the Holiness and Righteousness of God; therefore what was wanting in the intrinsick Value of the Creatures Suffering, behoved to be made up in the infinite Extent of it, and eternal Continuance of it upon the Creature. Thus there could never be a determined Time assigned, in which the Curse were fulfilled, and in which, Justice could say, *hold, I have enough.* It is, as if a Man were owing an infinite Debt, and he could get nothing to defray it, but poor petty Sums, which being all conjoined, cannot amount to any Proportion of it: Therefore, since he cannot get one Sum in Value equal to it, he must be eternally paying it in Smalls, according to his Capacity; and so, because the utmost Farthing cannot be won at, he can never be released out of Prison. But our Lord Jesus hath satisfied it to the full; he was a more substantial Debtor, and because of the infinite Dignity of his Person, there was an intrinsick Value upon his Sufferings, proportioned unto the Infiniteness of Mans Sin; so that he could pay all the Debt in a short Time, which a Sinner could but have done to all Eternity. Now, you know, any Man would rather choose such a Cautioner, that can solidly satisfy him in Gross, and pay all the Sum at once, than such a Principal, that because of his Inability, cannot amount to any considerable Satisfaction in many Years. And even so it is with the Law and Justice of God; they hold themselves better contented in Christ, than in us, in his being *made a Curse*, than the falling of the Curse on us, *Gal.* iii. 13. And therefore God testifies it to poor Sinners, *Deliver them, I have found a Ransom*, Job xxxiii. 24. and that is the Ransom which Christ gave, *his Life for many*, Mat. xx. 28.

You see then, how this Conclusion follows, *that the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us*, he having fulfilled it, and satisfied it so fully, both by Obedience to the Commandment, and Submission to the Curse; it is all one in God's Account, as if we had done it, because Christ was Surety in our Stead, and a common Person representing us, and therefore his paying of the Debt, acquits us at the Hand of Justice, and whatsoever he did to fulfil *all Righteousness*, that is accounted ours, because we were represented in him, and judicially one with him: And therefore, we were condemned when he was condemned, we were dead when he died, and so the Righteousness of the Law, in exacting a due Punishment for Sin, was fulfilled for us in him; and it is all one as if it had been personally us. And this is laid down as the Foundation of that blessed Embassy or Message of Reconciliation to Sinners, as that upon which *God is in Christ reconciling and beseeching us to be reconciled*, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, 21. *Him who knew no Sin, hath he made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* You see the blessed Exchange that he hath made with us, he hath laid our Sins on *sinless Christ*, and laid *Christ's Righteousness* on *sinful us*. Christ took our Sins on him, that he might give us his Righteousness, and by Vertue of this Transaction and Communication, as it was righteous with God to condemn Sin in Christ's Flesh, because our Sin was upon him, so it is as just with him to impute Righteousness to us, because we were in him: And as the Law made him a Curse, and exacted the Punishment of him, it is as righteous with the Lord, to give us Life and Salvation,

and to forgive Sin, as *John* ſpeaks, 1 Epiſtle i. 19. *If we confeſs our Sins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive our Sins.*

Now conſider this, my Beloved, for it is propounded unto you, as the greateſt Perſwaſive to move you to come to Jeſus Chriſt, there is ſuch a clear and plain Way in him to Salvation. If this do not move your Hearts, I know not what will: I do not expect that your Troubles in this World, the frequent Laſhes of Judgment, the impoveriſhing and exhauſting of you, the plucking away of theſe Things you loved, the diſquieting your Peace ſo often, that any of thoſe Things that have the Image of Wrath upon them, can drive you to him, and make you forſake your Way, when ſuch a Motive as this doth not prevail with you. O! what Heart could ſtand againſt the Power of this Perſwaſion, if it were but rightly apprehended? Who would not willingly fly in to this City of Refuge, if they did but know aright the Avenger of Blood that purſues them, and what Safety is within? You are always imagining vain Satisfactions to the Law of God; how great Weight doth your Fancy impoſe upon your Tears, your Confeſſions, your Reformations? If you can attain any Thing of this Kind, that is it which you give to ſatisfy Juſtice, it is that wherewith you pretend to fulfil the Law. But if it could be ſo, wherefore ſhould God have ſent his Son to condemn Sin, and purchaſe Righteouſneſs by him? I beſeech you, once know and conſider your Eſtate, that you may open your Hearts to this Redeemer, that you may be willing to be ſtript naked of all your imaginary Righteouſneſs, to put on this which will ſatisfy the Law fully. Will you die in your Sins, *becauſe you will not come to him to have Life?* Will you rather be condemned with Sin, than ſaved with Chriſt's Righteouſneſs? And truly, there is no other Altar that will preſerve you but this. Now, if any apprehending their own Miſery, be hardly purſued in their Conſciences, by the Law of God, I beſeech you come hither, and behold it ſatisfied and fulfilled. *I beſeech you in Chriſt's ſtead, to be reconciled unto God*, to lay down all hoſtile Affections, and come to him, becauſe *God is in Chriſt reconciling the World*, and *not imputing their Sins*, becauſe he hath imputed them already to Chriſt, *him who knew no Sin*, &c. and he is in Chriſt, imputing his Righteouſneſs to Sinners.

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SERMON XV.

Verse 4. *That the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us*, &c.

THINK not (saith our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ) *that I am come to destroy the Law, I am come to fulfil it*, Mat. v. 17. It was a needful Caveat, and a very timeous Advertisement, because of the natural Misapprehensions in Mens Minds of the Gospel. When free Forgiveness of Sins, and Life everlasting, is preached in Jesus Christ, without our Works; when the Mercy of God is proclaimed in its Freedom and Fulness, the Heart of Man is subject to a woful Misconceit of Christ, as if by these a Latitude were given, and a Liberty proclaimed to Men to live in Sin. That which is propounded as the Encouragement of poor Sinners, to come to God, and forsake their own wicked Way, it is miserably wrested upon a Mistake, to be an Encouragement to revolt more and more. Righteousness and Life, by Faith in a Saviour, without the Works of the Law, is holden out as the grand Perswasion of the Gospel, to study Obedience to the Law; and yet such is the Perverseness of many Hearts, that either in Opinion, or Practice, they so carry themselves, as if there were an Inconsistency between Christ and the Law, between free Justification and Sanctification, as if Christ had come to redeem us not from Sin, but to Sin. Now, to prevent this, *think not*, saith he, *that I am come to destroy the Law*; do not fancy to your selves a Liberty to live in Sin, and an Immunity from the Obligation of a Commandment, because I have puchased an Immunity and Freedom from the Curse; no, *I am come to fulfill* it rather, not only in mine own Person, but in yours also. And to this Purpose, *Paul*, Rom. iii. 31. *Do we then make void the Law by Faith?* It is so natural to our rebellious Hearts, to desire to be free from the Yoke of Obedience, and therefore we fancy such a Notion of Faith, as may not give it self to working in Love, as is active in nothing but Imagination. The Apostle abominates this, *God forbid*, he detests it, as impious and sacrilegious; *yea, we establish it*. So then, all returns to this, one of the great Ends of Christ's coming in his Flesh, and one main Intendment of the Gospel, published in this Name, is not meerly to deliver us from Wrath, and *reedem us from the Curse*, Gal. iii. 13. 1. Thess. i. 10. but also, and that especially, *to redeem us from all Iniquity, that we might be a People zealous of good Works*, Tit. ii. 14. and to take away Sin, and *destroy the Works of the Devil*, 1 Joh. iii. 5, 8. We spoke something before Noon, how Christ hath fulfilled

filled the Law, and eſtabliſhed it, in his own Perſon, by Obedience and Suffering, neither of which Ways it could be ſo well contented by any other: *But* there is yet a third Way that he fulfills and eſtabliſheth it, and that is, in our Perſons, *That the Righteouſneſs of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.* He hath obliged himſelf to fulfill it, not only for Believers, but in Believers; therefore the Promiſes run thus, *I will write my Law in their Hearts, and cauſe them to walk in my Statutes*, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Jer. xxxi. 33. Not only *I delight do thy Will*, but I will make them delight to do it alſo: And truly in this reſpect, the Law is more fulfilled and eſtabliſhed by Chriſt, than ever it could have been, if Man had been left to ſatisfy it alone. If we had reckoned alone with the Law, we had been taken up eternally with ſatisfying for the Breaches of it, ſo that there could be no Acceſs to Obedience of the Command, and no Acceptance either: A Sinner muſt firſt ſatisfy the Curſe, for the Fault done, before ever he can be in a Capacity to perform new Obedience on the Terms of Acceptation of it with God. Now the firſt would have taken up Eternity, ſo that there can be no Place of Entry to the ſecond; therefore, if Chriſt had not found out a Way of free Pardon of the *Sins that are paſt*, and Aſſurance of Forgiveneſs for the Time to come, the Commandments of God ſhould be wholly fruſtrated; but there is *Forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared*, Pſal. cxxx. 4. The Word is alſo, *worſhipped*. Truly my Beloved, this is the Fountain of all Religion, free Forgiveneſs: There hadbeen no Religion, no Worſhip of God, no Obedience to his Commands throughout all Eternity; there ſhould never have been any Fear, any Love, any Delight in God, any Reverence and Subjection to him, if he had not *Forgiveneſs*, a Treaſure of Mercies with him to beſtow firſt upon Sinners; and this makes Acceſs to ſtand and ſerve in his Sight. The Cloud of our Tranſgreſſions is ſo thick and dark, that there could never have been any Communion with God, if he had not found out the Way to *ſcatter and blot it out, for his own Name's ſake.* Religion then muſt begin at this great and ineſtimable free Gift of imputed Righteouſneſs, of accounting us, what we are not in our ſelves, becauſe found ſo in another, it begins at Remiſſion of Sins; but that is not all, this hath a further End, and truly it is but introductive to a further End; that ſo a Soul may be made Partaker of the Gift of *Holineſs* within, and *have that Image of God renewed in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs.* I would have you once perſuaded to begin at this, to receive the *free Gift* of another's *Righteouſneſs*, Rom. v. 17. and another's *Obedience*, to find your own Nakedneſs and Loathſomeneſs without this Covering, and how ſhort all other Coverings of your own Works are. O that we could once perſuade you to renounce your ſelves, to embrace this Righteouſneſs, then it were eaſy to prevail with you to renounce Sin, to put on Holineſs. I ſay, *firſt*, You muſt renounce your ſelves, as undone in all you do, as loathſome in all that ever you loved, and come under the wide and broad Skirt of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, which he did weave upon the Earth, for to hide our Nakedneſs. You muſt once have the *Righteouſneſs of the Law fulfilled* perfectly by another, before you can have Acceſs to fulfil one Jot of it your ſelves, or any Thing you do be accepted; and

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'till this Foundation be laid, you do but beat the Air in Religion, you build on the Sand.

Now if once you were brought this Length, to renounce all Confidence in your ſelves, and to flee into Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, then it were eaſy to lead you a Step further, to renounce the Love of your moſt beloved Sins: And the more lovely that Chriſt's Righteouſneſs is in your Eyes, the more Beauty would Holineſs and Obedience have in them alſo unto you; then you would labour to walk after the Guidance of the Spirit.

I would have the Impreſſion of this Deep in your Hearts, that the Goſpel is not a Doctrine of Licentiouſneſs, but a Doctrine of the pureſt Liberty, of the compleateſt Redemption. Many think it Liberty to ſerve their Luſts, and it is indeed as Bonds and Cords to reſtrain them. There is no Man but would be content to be ſaved *from the Wrath to come*, and therefore many ſnatch at ſuch Sentences of the Goſpel, and take them lightly, without Conſideration of what further is in it. But truly if this were all, it were not compleat Redemption, if there were not Redemption from Sin too, which is the moſt abſolute Tyrant in the World. I think a true Chriſtian would account the Service of Sin Bondage, though it were left at his own Option; *He that commits Sin, is the Servant of Sin*, therefore the Freedom that Chriſt purchaſeth, is Freedom from Sin, *Joh.* viii. 38. I will ſay more, we are delivered from Wrath, that ſo we may be redeemed from Sin, we have the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to us, that to the Image of Chriſt may be renewed within us, this is the very End of that. I am ſure any that diſcerns aright, knows Sin to have infinitely more Evil in it, than Puniſhment hath; nay, Puniſhment is only evil, as it hath Relation to Sin: There is a Beauty of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs in Puniſhment, but there is nothing in Sin, but Deformity and Oppoſition to his Holineſs, 'tis purely evil, and moſt purely hated of God: And if there were no more to perſuade you that Sin is infinitely more evil than Pain, conſider how our Pain and Puniſhment was really transferred upon the bleſſed Son of God, and that all this did not make him a whit the worſe; but he was not capable of the real Infuſion of our Sin, that would have made Chriſt as miſerable, wretched, and impotent as any of us; that would have diſabled him ſo far from helping us, that he would have had as much need of a Mediator, as we: All which were highly blaſphemous to imagine. Look then how much Diſtance and Difference there was between ſuffering, dying Chriſt, and wretched Men living in Sin: None can ſay but he is infinitely better, even while in Pain, nor the higheſt Prince in Pleaſure, ſo much Diſproportion there is between Sin and Pain, ſo much is the one worſe than the other. Do not think then that Chriſt died to purchaſe an Indulgence for you to live in Sin: Truly that were to take away the leſſer Evil, that the greater may remain; that were to deliver from one Miſery, that we may be more involved in that which is the greateſt of all Miſeries. Nay, certainly if Chriſt be a Redeemer, he muſt redeem us from our moſt potent and accurſed Enemy, *Sin*; he muſt take away the Root, the Fountain of all Miſery, *Sin*; that which conceived in its Womb all Pains, Sorrows, Sickneſſes, Death and Hell. You have the great End of Redemption expreſſed, *Luke* i. 75. *That we being delivered from all our Enemies, might ſerve him without*

out Fear, in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs. It was that for which he made Man at firſt, and it is that for which he hath made him again, *created unto good Works*, Eph. ii. 8. It was a higher Deſign certainly, for which the Son of God became Partaker of our Nature, than only to deliver us from Hell; no doubt it was to make us *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. and this is the very Nature of God, Holineſs and Goodneſs. As Sin is the very Nature and Image of the Devil, ſo the great Breach of the Creation was the breaking off of this Image of God, that was the heavieſt Fall of Man, from the Top of Divine Excellency, into the Bottom of deviliſh Deformity. Now it is this that is the great Plot for which Chriſt came into the World, to make up that Breach, to reſtore Man to that Dignity again; ſo that Redemption from Wrath is but a Step to aſcend upon, to that which is truly God's Deſign, and Man's Dignity, Conformity with God in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs.

O that you could be perſwaded of this, that Chriſt's Buſineſs in the World, was not to bring a Notion of an imaginary Righteouſneſs only, by meer Imputation, but to bring forth a ſolid and real Righteouſneſs in our Hearts, by the Operation of his Spirit: I ſay, Imputation, or accounting righteous, is but a meer Imagination, if this lively Operation do not follow. He came not only to ſpread his Garment over our Nakedneſs and Deformity, but really and effectually to be a Phyſician to ſave our Souls, to cure all our inward Diſtempers. The Goſpel is not only a Doctrine of a Righteouſneſs without us, but of a Righteouſneſs both *without*, *for*, and *within* us too; *that the Righteouſneſs of the Law might be fulfilled in us*, &c. Chriſt without, Happineſs it ſelf without, cannot make us happy, till they come in within us, and take up a Dwelling in our Souls. Therefore I declare unto the moſt Part of you who pretend to expect Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, that you are yet in your Sins, and as yet you have no Fellowſhip in this Redemption. Do you think to walk after the Courſe of the World, and the Luſts of the Fleſh, to wallow in theſe common Pollutions and Uncleanneſſes among Men, *Swearing*, *Lying*, *Contention*, *Railing*, *Wrath*, *Malice*, *Envy*, *Drunkenneſs*, *Uncleanneſs*, and ſuch like, and yet be *in Chriſt Jeſus? Do not deceive your ſelves, God is not mocked: He that is in Chriſt, is a new Creature*, his Endeavour and Study, his Affection and Deſire is toward a new Walk after the Spirit. Are not moſt of you carnal, all Fleſh; the Fleſh gives Laws, and you obey them? Are not your immortal Souls enſlaved to baſe Luſts, to the baſe Love of the World? Are they not prone to proſtitute themſelves to the Service of your fleſhly and brutiſh Part? Why do you then imagine, that you are in Chriſt Jeſus, Partakers of his Righteouſneſs? Conſider it in Time, that ſo you may be indeed, what you now are not, but pretend to be. It is the Opinion that you are in Chriſt already, that keeps you out of him.

But on the other Hand again, there is nothing here to diſcourage a poor Soul, that thinks Subjection to Sin the greateſt Slavery, who would as gladly be redeemed from the Power of it, as from Hell: I ſay to ſuch, whoſe Soul's Deſire it is to be purged from *all that Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit*, and whoſe continued Aim it is to walk in Obedience. Though you have many Failings, and often fall and defile your ſelf again, yet this Comfort is holden out here unto you, there is no

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Condemnation to you, Jesus Christ hath condemned Sin, to save you, he hath fulfilled all Righteousness for you; and therefore lay you the Weight of your Acceptation and Consolation upon what he hath done himself, and not upon what is but yet a doing in you. Do you not find, I say, that the Grace of Jesus Christ, revealed in the Gospel, is that which melts your Hearts most? Is not the Goodness of the Lord that which persuades you most? And do not these make you lothe your self, and love Holiness? Encourage your selves therefore in him, hold fast the Righteousness that is without you, by Faith, and certainly you shall find that Righteousness and Holiness shall in due Time be fulfilled within you. I know no Soul so wretched, but it may lay hold on that perfect Righteousness of Christ's, and go under the Covering of it, and take Heart from it, if so be the Desire and Affection of their Soul be directed to a further End, to have his Spirit dwelling within them, for the renewing of their Heart, *in Righteousness and true Holiness*. I do not say that this is a Condition which you must perform before you venture to lay hold on Christ's Righteousness without you; no ways, but rather I would declare unto you the very Nature of Faith in Christ, that it seeks Delivery from Wrath in him, not simply and lastly, but that a Way may be made for Redemption from Sin, and that there may be a Participation of that Divine Nature, which is most in its Eye.

SERMON XVI.

Verse 4, 5. *Who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the Flesh*, &c.

IF there were nothing else to engage our Hearts to Religion, I think this might do it, that there is so much Reason in it. Truly it is the most rational Thing in the World, except some revealed Mysteries of Faith, which are far above Reason, but not contrary to it; there is nothing besides in it, but that which is the purest Reason. Even that Part of it which is most difficult to Man, that which concerns the moderating of his Lusts and Affections, and the regulating his Walk and Carriage: There is nothing that Christianity requires in these Matters, but that which may be persuaded, by most convincing Reasons, to be most suitable and comely for Man, as Man; you may take it in the Subject in Hand; there is nothing sounds harsher to Men, and seems harder in Religion, than such a Victory over the Flesh, such an Abstractedness from sensual and earthly Things; and yet, truly, there is nothing in the World, that more adorns and beautifies a Man, nothing so elevates him above Beasts, as this, in so much that many natural Spirits, void of this saving Light, have notwithstanding been taken with somewhat of the Beauty of it, and so far enamoured with the Love of it, as to account all the World mad and brutish, that followed these lower Things, and inslaved themselves

unto them. I take the two Fountains of all the Pollutions, Diſorders, and Defilements among Men, to be the Inconſideration and Ignorance of God, that eternal Spirit, and Fountain-being, and the Ignorance of our own Souls, theſe immortal Spirits within us, which are derived from that Fountain-ſpirit. This is the Miſery of Men, that ſcarce do they once ſeriouſly reflect upon their own Spirits, or think what immortal Souls is within them, and what Affinity theſe have to the Fountain of all Spirits; therefore, do Men baſely throw down themſelves to the Satisfaction of the Luſts of the Fleſh. Now indeed, this is the very Beginning of Chriſtianity, to reduce Men from theſe baſer Thoughts and Employments, to the Conſideration of their immortal Souls within. And O! how will a Chriſtian bluſh to behold himſelf in that Light, to ſee the very Image of a Beaſt upon his Nature, to look on that Slavery and Bondage of his far better Part, to the worſt and brutiſh Part in him, *his Fleſh*.

If a Man did wiſely conſider the Conſtitution of his Nature, from its firſt Divine Original, and what a Thing the Soul is, which is truly, and more properly, *himſelf*, than his Body; what Excellency is in the Soul beyond the Body, and ſo, what Preheminency it advanceth a Man unto, beyond a Beaſt: He could not but account Religion the very Ornament and Perfection of his Nature. Reaſon will ſay, that the Spirit ſhould rule and command the Body, that *Fleſh* is but the Miniſter and Servant of the Spirit, that there is nothing the proper and peculiar Good of Man, but that which adorns and rectifies the Spirit; that all theſe external Things which Mens Senſes are carried after, with ſo much Violence, do not better a Man, as Man, but are common to Beaſts; that in theſe Things, Man's Happineſs, as Man, doth not all conſiſt, but in ſome higher and more tranſcending Good, which Beaſts are not capable of, and which may ſatisfy the immortal Spirit, and not periſh in the uſing, but live with it: All theſe Things, the very natural Frame and Conſtitution of Man doth convincingly perſuade. Now then, may a Soul think within it ſelf, O how far am I departed from my Original? How far degenerated from that noble and royal Dignity, that God by the Stamp of his Image once put upon me? How is it that I am become a Slave and Drudge to that baſer and brutiſh Part, the Fleſh? I would have you retire into your own Hearts, and ask ſuch Things at them. *Man being in Honour and underſtanding not, is even like the Beaſts that periſh.* Truly we are become like Beaſts, becauſe we conſider not that we are Men, and ſo advanced by Creation far above Beaſts. The not reflecting on the immortal, ſpiritual Nature of our Souls, hath transformed us, in a manner, into the Nature of Beaſts, periſhing Beaſts. Chriſtianity is the very transforming of a Beaſt into a Man, as Sin was the deforming of a Man into a Beaſt: This is the proper Effect of Chriſtianity, to reſtore Humanity, to elevate it, and purify it from all thoſe Defilements and Corruptions that were ingroſſed and incorporated into it, by the State of Subjection to the Fleſh; and therefore the Apoſtle delineates the Nature of it unto us, and draws the Difference wide, between the natural Man and a Chriſtian.

The Natures of Things are dark and hidden in themſelves, but they come to be known to us, by their Operations and acting; their Inclinations and Inſtincts are known this Way. Grace is truly a very ſpiritual Thing, and the Nature of it lies high; yet as *Chriſt could not be hid in*

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the Houſe, neither can Grace be hid in the Heart, it will be known by its Working. Chriſt can be better hid in a Houſe, than in the Heart, becauſe, when he is engaged to reſtore that Heart and Soul to its native Dignity and Preheminency over the Fleſh, this cannot but cauſe much Diſturbance in the Man, for a Seaſon; to change Governments, to caſt out Uſurpers, and to reſtore the lawful and righteous Owner, to the Poſſeſſion of his Right, cannot be done ſecretly and eaſily; it will ſhake the very Foundations of a Kingdom to accompliſh it: So it is here, the Reſtitution of the Soul, to the Poſſeſſion of its Right and Dominion over the Fleſh, the caſting out of that tyrannous and baſe Uſurper, the Fleſh, cannot be done, except all the Man knew it, feel it and in manner be pained with it. Now the Nature of Chriſtianity doth lay it ſelf open to us in theſe two eſpecially, in what it minds and ſavours, and how it cauſeth to walk. Life is known eſpecially by *Affection* and *Motion*: A feeling, thinking, ſavouring Power, is a living Power, ſo a moving, walking Power is a living Power, and theſe are here. The Chriſtian is ſhortly deſcribed by his Nature, he is one *after the Spirit, not after the Fleſh*, and by the proper Characteriſtical Operations of that Nature, firſt, *minding or ſavouring the Things of the Spirit*, which comprehends his inward Thoughts, Affections, Intentions, and Cogitations; all his inward Senſes are exerciſed about ſuch Objects: And then he is one *walking after the Spirit*, his Motions are in a Courſe of Obedience, proceeding from that inward Reliſh or Taſte that he hath of the Things of God. It is not without very good Reaſon, that the Name of a Chriſtian is thus expreſſed, one *after the Spirit*; that is his Character, that expreſſes his Nature unto us; whether ye look to the Original of Chriſtianity, or the prime Subject of it, or the chief End of it, it deſerves to be called by this Name. The Original of it is very *high*, as high as that eternal Spirit, as high as *the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh*. Things are like their Original, and ſome Way participate of the Nature of their Cauſes; *that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*, Joh. iii. 6. that which is born of God, who is a *Spirit, muſt be Spirit*, 1 Joh. v. 1. How royal a Deſcent is that? How doth it nobilitate a Man's Nature? Truly all other Degrees of Birth among Men are vain imaginary Things, that hath no Worth at all, but in the Fancies of Men, they put no real Excellency in Men. But this is only true Nobility, this alone doth extract a Man *de fæce vulgi*, out of the Dregs of the Multitude. There is no intrinſick Difference between Bloods, or Natures, but what *this* makes, this Divine Birth, this ſecond Birth; all other Differences are but in Opinion, this is in Reality; it puts the Image of that bleſſed Spirit upon a Man. Truly, ſuch a Creature is not begotten in the Womb of any natural Cauſe, of any humane Perſwaſion, or *inticing Words of Man's Wiſdom*, of any external Mercy, or Judgment; no Inſtruction, no Perſwaſion, no Allurement, nor Affrightment can make you Chriſtians *in the Spirit, till the Spirit blow when it pleaſeth, and create you again*. It muſt come from above, that Power that can ſet your Hearts aright, and make them to look ſtraight above.

Chriſt Jeſus came down from Heaven unto the Earth, and took on our Fleſh, that ſo the Almighty Spirit might come down to transform our Spirits, and lift them up from the Earth to the Heaven. We caſt

the Seed into the Ground of Mens Hearts, (and alas, it gets Entry but in few Souls, it is ſcattered rather on the High-way Side, and cannot reach into the arable Ground of the Heart) but it can do nothing without the Influence of Heaven, except the Spirit beget you again, by that immortal Seed of the Word. Therefore we would ceaſe our Wondering, that all the Means of God's Word and Works do not beget more true Chriſtians; I do rather wonder that any of *Adam*'s wretched Poſterity ſhould be begotten again, and advanced to ſo high a Dignity, to *be born of the Spirit.* O that Chriſtians would mind their Original, and wonder at it, and ſtudy to be like it! If you believe and conſider that your Deſcent is from that uncreated Spirit, how powerful might that be to conform you more and more to him, and to transform more and more of your Fleſh into Spirit? There is nothing will raiſe up the Spirits of the Children of Princes more, than to know their royal Birth and Dignity: How ſhould the Conſideration of this make your Spirits ſuitable to your State or Fortunes, (as we uſe to ſay?) You would labour to raiſe them up to that Height of your Original, and to *walk worthy of that high Calling.* O that we could learn that Inſtruction from it, which *Paul* gives, 1 *Cor.* i. 30, 31. *But of him are ye in Chriſt; therefore let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord:* Truly, a Soul poſſeſſed with the Meditation of this royal Deſcent from God, could not poſſibly glory in theſe inglorious baſer Things, in which Men glory, and could not contain or reſtrain Gloriation and Boaſting in him. *The Glory of many is their Shame,* becauſe 'tis their Sin, of which they ſhould be aſhamed: But ſuppoſe that in which Men glory, be not Shame in it ſelf, as the lawful Things of this preſent World, yet certainly it is a great Shame for a Chriſtian to glory in them, or eſteem the better of himſelf for them. If this were minded always, that we are of God, born of God, what Power do ye think Temptations or Solicitations to Sin would have over us? *He that is born of God ſinneth not, he keepeth himſelf, and the wicked One toucheth him not,* 1 Joh. v. 18, 19. Truly this Conſideration imprinted in the Heart, would elevate us above all theſe baſer Perſuaſions of the Fleſh; this would make Sin lothſome and deſpicable, as the greateſt Indignity we could do to our own Natures. The Strength and Advantage of Sin, is to make us forget what we are, whom we have Relation unto, to drink us drunk with the Puddle of the World, or then with our own Jealouſies and Suſpicions, that we may forget our Birth and State, and ſo be enticed to any Thing. If you would have wherewith to beat back all *the fiery Darts of the Devil,* take *the Shield of* this *Faith* and Perſuaſion; how would it ſilence Temptations? *Shall I, who am a Ruler, flee,* ſaith *Nehemiah?* Shall I who am born of the Spirit? Shall I who am of God in Chriſt, abaſe my ſelf to ſuch unworthy and baſe Things? Shall I diſhonour my Father, and diſgrace my ſelf.

Then Chriſtianity its chief Reſidence, its royal Seat, is in the Spirit of Man, and ſo he is one after the Spirit. *Be ye renewed in the Spirit of your Minds,* Eph. iv. 23. As it is of a high Deſcent, ſo it muſt have the higheſt and moſt honourable Lodging in all the Creation, that is, the Spirit of a Man; without this there is no Room elſe fit for it, and ſuitable to it, in this lower World; *My Son give me thine Heart,* ſaith Wiſdom, *Pro.* xxiii. 26. It cares for nothing beſides, if it get not the Heart, the inmoſt Cabinet of

of the imperial City of this Isle of Man, for *out of it are the Issues of Life*, that flow into all the Members. Do not think that Grace will lodge one Night in your outward Man, that you can put on Christianity upon your Countenance or Conversation without; except your admit it into your Souls, it can have no suitable Entertainment there alone, 'tis of a spiritual Nature, and it must have a Spirit to abide in. Every Thing is best preserved and entertained by Things suitable to its Nature; such do incorporate together, and imbosom one with another; whereas Things keep a greater Distance with Things different in Nature; a Flame will die out among cold Stones, without oylie Matter. This heavenly Fire that is descended into the World, can have nothing earthly to feed upon, it must die out, except it get into the immortal Spirit, and then furnish (to speak so) perpetual Nourishment to it, till at length all the Spirit be set on Flame, and changed, as it were, into that heavenly Substance, to mount up above, from whence it came. Do not think, my Beloved, to superinduce *true Religion* upon your Out-side, and within to be *as rotten Sepulchres*; you must either open your Hearts to Christ, or else he will *not* abide with you: Such a noble Guest will not stay in the Suburbs of the City, if you take him not into the Palace; and truly the Palace of our Hearts is too unworthy for such a worthy Guest, it hath been so defiled by Sin; how vile is it? but if you would let him enter, he would wash it and cleanse it for himself.

Will you know then the Character of a Christian? He is one *much within*, he hath retired into his own Spirit, to know how it goes with it, and he finds all so disordered and confused, all so unsettled, that he gets so much Business to do at Home, as he gets no Leisure to come much Abroad again. It is the Misery of Men, that they are wholly without, carried into external Things only; and this is the very Character of a Beast, that it cannot reflect inwardly upon it self, but is wholly spent on Things that are presented to the outward Senses. There is nothing in which Men are more assimulated to Beasts, than this, that we do not speak in our selves, or return into our own Bosoms, but are wholly occupied about the Things that are without us; and thus it fares with us, as with the Man that is busy in all other Mens Matters, and never thinks of his own, his Estate must needs ruin, all his Affairs must be out of Course. Truly, while we are immersed and drowned in external Things, our Souls are perishing, our inward Estate is washing away, all our own Affairs, that can only and properly be called ours, are disordered and jumbled. Therefore, Christianity doth first of all recal the wandering and vain Spirit of Man into itself, as that Exhortation is, *Psal.* iv. 9. to *commune with his own Heart*, to make a diligent Search of his own Affairs; and, O! how doth he find all out of Course, as a Garden neglected, all overgrown, *as a House not inhabited*, all dropping through, in a Word, wholly ruinous, through intolerable Negligence. It was the first Turn of the Prodigal to return to himself, *he came to himself*, Luke xv. 17. Truly Sin is not only an Aversion from God, but it is an Estrangement from ourselves, from our Souls, from our own Happiness; 'tis a Madness that takes away the Use of Reason and Consideration of our own selves. But Grace is a Conversion, not only to God, but to our selves, it bringeth a Man Home

Home to his Heart, maketh him ſober again, who was beſide himſelf: Hence that Phraſe, 1 *Kings* viii. 47. *When they ſhall turn to their own Hearts, and return.* It is the moſt laborious Vanity, or the vaineſt Labour, to compaſs Heaven and Earth, to be ſo buſied Abroad, to know other Things, and then to know and conſider nothing of that, which of all Things moſt nearly concerns us, *our ſelves*; *what ſhalt it profit a Man, if he gain the whole World and loſe his Soul?* for that is *himſelf.* And what ſhall it profit, to know all, and not know his Soul, to be every where, but where he ought to be. Well, a Chriſtian is one called Home from vain impertinent Diverſions, one that is occupied moſt about his Soul and Spirit, how to have all the Diſorders he finds in himſelf ordered, all theſe Diſtempers cured, all theſe Defilements waſhed, this is the Buſineſs he is about in this World, *to waſh his Heart from Wickedneſs*, Jer. iv. 14. to cleanſe even vain Thoughts, and ſhut up from that ordinary Repair, his own Heart; he is about the incloſing it, to be a Garden to the Well-beloved, to bring forth ſweet Fruits; he is about the renewing of it, the adorning it with the new Man, againſt that Day of our Bridegroom's appearing, and bringing him up to celebrate the Marriage. Though he be in *the Fleſh*, yet he is moſt taken up with *his Spirit*, how to have it reſtored to that primitive Beauty and Excellency, the Image of God in it; how *to be cloathed with Humility, and to put on the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, that he accounts his Beauty, how *to rule his own* Spirit, that he accounts only true Fortitude, and thinks it a greater Vaſſalage and Victory to overcome himſelf than his Enemy, and eſteems it the nobleſt Revenge, not to be like to other Men that wrong him; he is occupied about the higheſt Gain and Advantage, *viz.* to ſave his Spirit and Soul, and accounts all Loſs to this, to bring Jeſus Chriſt into the Heart; that this is the Jewel he digs for, and eſteems all Dung in Compariſon of it. If you be Chriſtians after the Spirit, no doubt, you are buſied this Way about your Spirits: For others, they are buſied about the Fleſh, to *make Proviſion for its Luſts*; and there needs no other Mark to know them by. Alas! poor Souls, that you have never yet adverted, that you have Spirits, immortal Beings within you, which muſt ſurvive this Duſt, this corruptible Fleſh; What will you do, when you cannot have Fleſh to care for? When your Spirits can have nothing to be carried forth into, but muſt eternally dwell within the Boſom of an evil Conſcience, and be tormented with that Worm, the bitter Remembrance of the Neglect of your Spirits, and utter Eſtrangement from them, while you were in the Body? Then you muſt be confined within your own evil Conſciences, and be impriſoned there for ever, becauſe, while yet there was Time and Seaſon, you were always Abroad, and every where, but within your own Hearts and Conſciences, and is not that a juſt Recompence?

Then again, as Chriſtianity deſcends from the Father of Spirits, into the Spirit of a Man to lodge there for a while, it doth at length bring up the Spirit of a Man, and unites it to that eternal Spirit; and ſo, as the Original was high and divine, the End is high too. It iſſues out of that Fountain, and returns with the Heart of Man, to imboſom it ſelf in that again. And truly, this is the great Excellency of true Religion above all theſe Things you are buſied about, that it elevates the Spirit of a Man to God, that

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it will never reſt, till it have carried it above to the Fountain-ſpirit. Our Spirits are Sparks and Chips (to ſpeak ſo with Reverence) of that divine Being; but now they are wholly immerſed and ſunk into the Fleſh, and into the Earth by Sin, till Grace come down and renew them, and extract them out of that Dunghill, and purify them; and then they are, as in a State of Violence, always ſtriving to mount upwards, till they be embodied, or rather inſpirited (ſo to ſpeak) in that Original Spirit, till they be wholly united to their own Element, *the Divine Nature*. You know Chriſt's Prayer, *John* xvii. *That they may be one, as we are one, I in them, and they in me, that they may be made perfect in one*, ver. 22, 23. Then Spirits have attained the Perfection, then *will they reſt from their Labours*, when they are one with him; this is the only Center of Spirits, in which they can reſt immoveable. You find all the Deſires and Affections of the Saints are, as ſo many Breathings upward, Pantings after Union with him, and Longings to be intimately preſent with the Lord; therefore, a Chriſtian is one *after the Spirit, groaning* to be all Spirit, *to have the earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle diſſolved, and to be cloathed upon with that Houſe from Heaven*: He knows with *Paul*, that *he is not at Home*, though he be at Home in the Body, becauſe the Body is that *which ſeparates from the Lord*, which Partition-wall, he would willingly have taken down, that his Spirit might be at Home, *preſent with the Lord*, 2 Cor. vi. 1. *&c. Who knoweth* (ſaith *Solomon*) *the Spirit of a Man that aſcends upward, and the Spirit of the Beaſt that goeth downward to the Earth*, Eccleſ. iii. 21. Truly, the natural Motion of Man's Spirit, ſhould be to aſcend upward to God who gave it: When this frail and broken Veſſel of the Body is diſſolved into the Elements, the higher and purer Nature that lodged within it ſhould fly upwards to Heaven; even as the Spirit of the Beaſts, being but the prime and finer Part of the Body, not different in Nature from the Earth, naturally falls down to the Earth with the Body, and is diſſolved into the Elements. But I think, the Conſideration of that woful Diſorder, that Sin hath brought into the World, that all Things in Man are ſo degenerated, and become brutiſh, both his Affections and his Converſation, that carnal and ſenſual Luſts have the whole Dominion over Men; I ſay, the ſerious and earneſt View of this, might make a Man ſuſpect and call in Queſtion, whether or not there be any Difference between Men and Beaſts? Whether or not there be any Spirit in the One of a higher Nature than in the other? Truly, it would half perſuade, that there is no immortal Spirit in Man, elſe how could he be ſuch a Beaſt all his Time, *ſerving diverſe Luſts*? Can it be poſſible, might one think, that there is any Spirit in Men, that can aſcend to Heaven, when there is no Motion thither, to be obſerved among Men? I beſeech you, conſider this, the Spirit muſt either aſcend or deſcend, when it goes out of the Body, as now in Affection and Endeavour it aſcends or deſcends while it is in the Body; there is an indiſpenſible Connection between theſe, what Way ſoever the Spirit aims, at which Way ſoever it turns and directs its Flight, thither it ſhall be conſtrained to go eternally. Do you think, my Beloved, while you are in the Body, to bow down your ſelves to the Earth, to deſcend into the Service of the Fleſh all your Time, never once ſeriouſly to riſe up in the Conſideration of Eternity, or lift up

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your Heads above temporal and earthly Things, and yet in the close to ascend unto Heaven? No, no, do not deceive your selves, you must go forward, this Life and Eternity makes one straight Line, either of Ascent or Descent, of Happiness or Misery: And since you have bowed down always, while in the Body, there is no rising up after it, forward you must go, and that is downward to that Element, which you transformed your Spirits into, that is the Earth, or below the Earth to Hell, your Spirits hath most Affinity with these, and down they must go, as a Stone to the Earth. But if you would desire to have your Spirits ascending up to Heaven, when they are let out of this Prison, the Body, take heed which Way they turn, bend and strive, while here in the Body: If your Struglings be to be upward at God, if you have discovered that Blessedness is in him, and if this be the Predominant of your Spirit, that carries it upwards in Desires and Endeavours, and turns it off the base Study of satisfying the Flesh, and the base Love of the World; if thy Soul be mounting aloft, on these Wings of holy Desires of a better Life, than can be found in any Thing below, certainly the Motion of thy Spirit will be in a straight Line upward: When thou leaves thy Dust to the Earth, Angels waits to carry that Spirit to that Bosom of Christ, where it longed and liked most to be; but Devils do attend the Souls of most part of Men, to thrust them down below the Earth, because they did still bend down to the Earth.

SERMON XVII.

Vers. 5. *For they that are after the Flesh, do mind the Things of the Flesh*, &c.

THough Sin hath taken up the principal and inmost Cabinet of the Heart of Man, though it hath fixed its imperial Throne in the Spirit of Man, and makes use of all the Powers and Faculties in the Soul to accomplish its accursed Desires, and fulfil its boundless Lusts; yet it is not without good Reason expressed in Scripture, ordinarily under the Name of *Flesh*, and a *Body of Death*, and Men dead in Sins, are said to be yet in the Flesh. The Reason is, partly because this was the Rise of Man's first Ruine, or the chiefest Ingredient in his first Sin, his hearkening to the Suggestions of his Flesh, against the clear Light and Knowledge of his Spirit. The Apple was beautiful to look on, and sweet to the Taste, and this engaged Man: Thus the *voluntary* Debasement and Subjection of the Spirit, (which was breathed in of God,) unto the Service of that Dust which God had appointed to serve it, hath turned into a *necessary* Slavery, so that the Flesh being put in the Throne, cannot be cast out; and this is the righteous Judgment of God upon Man, that he that would not serve so good and so high a Lord, should be made a Drudge and

and Slave to the very Dregs of the Creation. Partly again, becauſe the Fleſh hath in it the Seeds of the moſt Part of theſe evil Fruits, which abound in the World. The moſt Part of our Corruptions have either their Riſe or their Increaſe from the Fleſh; the moſt Part of the Evils of Men are either conceived in the Fleſh, or brought forth by it, by the Miniſtry and Help of our degenerate Spirits. And truly this is it that makes our returning to God ſo hard and difficult a Work, becauſe we are in the Fleſh, which is like Stubble, diſpoſed to conceive Flame upon any Sparkle of a Temptation; there are ſo many Diſpoſitions and Inclinations in the Body ſince our Fall, that are as powerful to carry us to Exceſs and Inordinateneſs in Affection or Converſation, as the natural Inſtincts of Beaſts do drive them on to their own proper Operations. You know, the Fleſh is oftentimes the greateſt Impediment that the Spirit hath, becauſe of its Lumpiſhneſs and earthly Quality. How willing would the Spirit be, how nimble and active in the Ways of Obedience, if it were not retarded, dulled and clogged with the heavy Lump of our Fleſh? *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Fleſh is weak*, ſaith Chriſt, *Mat.* xxvi. 41. Truly I think the great Remiſſneſs, Negligence, Weakneſs, Fainting of Chriſtians, in their Race of Chriſtianity, ariſeth ordinarily from this Weight that is carried about with them, that it muſt be ſome extraordinary Impulſe of a higher Spirit, to drive us on without wearying. And becauſe of this Indiſpoſition of the Fleſh, we are not able to bear much of God's Preſence in this Life, (it would certainly confound Mortality, if ſo much were let out of it as is in Heaven) no more than a weak Eye can endure to behold the Sun in its Brightneſs. And then the Fleſh, as it is the greateſt Retardment in good, it is the greateſt Incitement to evil, it is a Boſom-enemy, that betrays us to Satan, it is near us, and connatural to us; and this is the great Advantage Satan hath of a Chriſtian, he hath a Friend within every Chriſtian, that betrays him often. You know the moſt Part of Temptations from without could have no ſuch Force or Strength againſt us, if there were not ſome Prediſpoſition in the Fleſh, ſome Seeds of that evil within, if they were not preſented with ſome Suitableneſs to our Senſes; and they being once engaged on Satan's Side, they eaſily draw the whole Man with them, under a falſe Colour and Pretence of Friendſhip; therefore they are ſaid to *war againſt the Soul*, 1 Pet. ii. 11. and they are ſaid *eaſily to beſet us*, Heb. xii. 1. Truly it is no Wonder that the Enemy ſtorm our City, when the Out-works, yea, the very Ports of the City, are poſſeſſed by Traitors; no wonder Satan approach near the Walls with his Temptations, when our Senſes, our fleſhly Part, is ſo apt to receive him, and ready to entertain all Objects without Difference, that are ſuitable to affect them.

You ſee then how much Power the *Fleſh* hath in Man, ſo that it is no Wonder that every natural Man hath this Denomination, *one after the Fleſh*, one carnal from the predomining Part, tho' the worſt Part. Every Man by Nature, till a higher Birth come, may be called all Fleſh, all faſhioned and compoſed of the Fleſh, and after the Fleſh, even his Spirit and Mind fleſhly and earthly, ſunk into the Fleſh, and transformed into a brutiſh Quality or Nature. Now the great Purpoſe of the Goſpel is, to bring alongſt a Deliverer unto your Spirits, for the releaſing and unfettering of them from the Chains of fleſhly Luſts. This is the

very Work of Christianity, to give Liberty to the captive Souls of Men, *and the Opening of the Prison to them that are bound*, Isa. lxiii. 1. The Souls of Men are chained with their own fleshly Lusts, and if at any Time they can break these grosser Chains, as some finer Spirits have escaped out of the vilest Dungeon of the Flesh, and cast off these heavier Chains that bind the most Part of Men, yet wholly escape they cannot: There be higher and lower Rooms of this Prison, there are some more gross; some more subtile Cords and Bands of the Flesh; and whatsoever it be that holds a Man bound, or in whatsoever House he be imprisoned, 'tis not much Matter, since really he is bound, and his Liberty restrained. If a Chain of Gold binds as fast as a Chain of Iron, there is no real Difference, except that Mockery is added unto it when a Man is detained in a Golden Prison with Golden Chains. Tho' some Men, I say, escape the grosser Pollutions of the Flesh, yet they are fettered within some narrow, scant, and but imaginary good Things, they cannot go without the Compass of those; Every Man is confined by Nature within the Circle of his own narrow Bosom, or if he expatiate into the Field of the World, yet how narrow, how limited are all created Objects, for the infinite Desires of the Soul, whether it tend to the Enjoyment of other Creatures, or to the Possession of some imaginary Excellency in a Man's self; how straitned are they? How imprisoned in all that Compass? There is no true Liberty can be found there. Though some may be disingaged from baser Lusts, and the common vain Employments of Men; yet far they cannot go, they do but engage more with *themselves* the Love and Estimation of themselves; without that Compass they cannot possibly go, whether from another Principle, or to another End: And, O! how little Bounds is within any created Breast for the immortal Spirit, that is so vast and expatiating in its Desires, to dwell in?

But here is the perfect Redemption that is in Jesus Christ; when he comes into the Soul, he unfetters and releases it, not only of the grosser Lusts of the Flesh, but even of these subtile invisible Bands of Self-love, Self-seeking, of all scant, narrow, and particular Objects, and sets it at Liberty to expatiate on that universal Good, the infinite Fulness of God, and Grace which is in Christ Jesus: And hence a Christian is called one *after the Spirit*, that is, whose Spirit is rid and delivered from that natural Bondage and Slavery to the Creatures, and is espoused, at least in Affection and Endeavour, to the All-sufficient and Self-sufficient God.

We told you that this new Nature of a Christian shews itself in Affection and Motion, in minding and walking; both are Signs of Life, and the proper Actions of it. As the natural Man is easily known by what he minds and savours, and what Way he walks, so is the spiritual Man: *Minding* or *Savouring* comprehends, no doubt, all the inward Acts of the Soul, all the Imaginations, Cogitations, Thoughts, Affections, Desires and Purposes of the Soul: To express it shortly, there is a Concurrence of these two, Cogitation and Affection, the Understanding and the Will, in this Business. *The natural Man knoweth not the Things of the Spirit*, so he cannot taste or relish them, since he doth not know them, 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. *How can they believe on him whom they have not heard?* But far more, how can Men love and desire that which they do not know? Though it be hard to convince some

ſome that they know not God, nor the Things of the Spirit, becauſe they *have ſome Form of Knowledge*, and ſeem to underſtand, and can diſcourſe on Religion; yet I wonder that the moſt Part of Men, whoſe Ignorance is written in their Foreheads, with ſuch palpable Characters, ſhould have ſo much Difficulty to take with this Challenge. I am ſure, many that perſuade themſelves of Heaven, are yet ſhut up in that Dungeon of natural Blindneſs and Darkneſs of Mind, and that ſo groſs and thick Darkneſs, that it is not poſſible to make them conceive any Notion of ſpiritual Things; the common Twilight of Nature is almoſt extinguiſhed, and little or nothing increaſed by their Education in the viſible Church. How can you prize and eſteem Jeſus Chriſt, of whom you know nothing but the bare Name? How can you ſavour Heaven, when you have never admitted one ſerious Thought of the Life to come? O that you could be perſuaded, that the Grace of God is inconſiſtent with ſuch groſs Ignorance, as is the Generality of you; truly Grace is a Light ſhining in the Soul, that opens the Eyes to ſee that Light that ſurrounds us in the Goſpel. But will you conſider, Beloved, how ready you are to receive other Things of no Moment, how your Memories can retain them, and your Underſtandings receive other Purpoſes very perplexed and laborious; but for the Knowledge of your Sin and Miſery, or of that bleſſed Remedy ſhewed in the Goſpel, we cannot make you capable of a few Queſtions about them; and if you learn the Words by Heart, (as you uſe to ſpeak) yet alas! the Matter and Thing it ſelf is not in the Heart or Mind, you have nothing but Words, as appears; if we ask about that ſame Matter in other Words and Terms, it is as dark and new to you, as if you had never heard it. I beſeech you conſider, if you do not then mind the Things of the Fleſh moſt, when you are not only moſt capable to know theſe Things that concern this Life, but moſt ready to entertain ſuch Thoughts. You have no Difficulty to mind the World whole Weeks and Years, but you can never find Leiſure or Time to mind the Life to come; and yet vainly you ſay, you mind it always. I beſeech you, how do you mind God, and the Things of God, when if you will but recollect your Thoughts, and gather the Sum of them, you will not find one ſerious adviſed Thought of him or his Matters in a whole Week? I profeſs, I wonder how ſo many can enforce upon themſelves a Perſuaſion that God is always in their Heart. I think it is the Height of Deluſion! I am ſure he is not in one of Ten thouſand Thoughts, that travel, walk, lodge and dwell in the Souls of Men; and yet they will needs bear upon themſelves that they always mind him. I am ſure moſt of you cannot ſay that ever you ſhut the Doors of your Hearts upon other vain Objects, that you might retire to ſecret Meditation on *God*, or Conference with him; and I am as ſure, that many Men have God oftner in their Mouths, by Oaths and Blaſphemies, and irreverent Speaking, and taking his holy Name in vain, than in their Minds, Prayers or Praiſes, or any holy Meditations of him. Are you not as unwilling to fix your Minds upon any ſad ſolemn Thoughts of God's Juſtice, of Hell, of Heaven, of Sin or Miſery, of Death, as Boys whoſe Heads are full of Play, are loath to go to their Books. Doth not your Practice in this ſpeak, with theſe wicked Men, *Job* xxi. 14. *Depart from us, we deſire not the Knowledge of the Almighty*. How conſtrained are all

your Thoughts of Religion? They are entertained as these whom you would not desire to come again. But how unconstrained, how free are all other Thoughts? Our Minds can rove whole Days about Vanity, about Fancies, Dreams, Nothings; but you neither like to admit nor retain the Knowledge of God in your Mind, *Rom.* i. 28. Do you not entertain any serious weighty Thoughts of Religion, that by occasion may enter, as Firebrands, as hot Coals in your Bosom? How glad are you to get any Diversion to other Things? How willing to shun them, or cast them out? But if it be any temporal Thing, any Thing relating to this Flesh, your Thoughts come freely off, are steady and fixed, as long as you please; your Minds can travel through all the Ends of the Earth, to bring in some Fancy of Gain or Advantage, or to steal by precious Time, and that without wearying. Now all these Things considered, my Beloved, *are you not carnal*? I speak to the most of you, are you not these who are born of the Flesh, since you mind nothing seriously, resolutely, constantly and willingly, but the Things of the Flesh, and the Things of this Life? O! it is no light Matter to be born of the Flesh; if you continue so, you are ordained for Corruption, for Death; *to be carnally minded is Death*, ver. 6. of this Chap.

But I am perswaded better Things of some of you, that the true Light of God hath shined into your Hearts, and revealed more excellent Things unto you, than these perishing fleshly Things, *viz.* heavenly, substantial and eternal Things in the Gospel, which you account only worthy of the fixed and continued Meditation of your Spirits. I am sure, *you* perceive another Beauty and Excellency in these Things than the World doth, because the Spirit hath revealed them unto you. It is true, that your Minds are yet much darkned in the Apprehension of spiritual Things, they are not so willing to receive them, nor so ready to retain them as you desire, they are very unsettled and unstudy in the Meditations of spiritual Things, and there are innumerable Thoughts of other Things that pass through your Hearts, like common Inns, uncontrolled at their Pleasure; all this is true, but I am sure it is the Grief of your Souls, that your Hearts are not so fixed and established, as the Excellency of these spiritual Things require. I know it will be the Aim and real Endeavour of any spiritual Heart, to be shutting up all the Entries and Doors of the Mind, that *vain Thoughts* enter not; yet enter they will, there are so many Porches to enter in at, and our narrow Spirits cannot watch at all, every Sense will let in Objects, and Imagination itself will be active in framing them, and presenting them: But yet the Endeavour of a Christian will be, not to let them lodge long within, *Jer.* iv. 14. If they come in unawares, he will labour to make a Diversion to a better purpose, and so still it holds good, that the Current and Course of a Christian's Thoughts and Cogitations are upon the *Things of the Spirit*, how to get his own Heart washed and cleansed, how to be more holy and conformed to Christ, how to be at Peace with God, and keep that Peace unbroken; how to walk in Obedience to God, and in Duty towards Men, how to forsake himself, and withal to deny himself in all these; I say, his most serious and solemn Thoughts are about these Things, his resolved and advised Thoughts run most on this Strain, tho' it be true, that whether he will or not, other vain and impertinent, or not so concerning Thoughts, will pass more lightly

lightly, and too frequently through his Heart.

The other Thing in which this ſpiritual Life doth appear, is the Current of the Affections, or that Reliſh and Taſte of the Sweetneſs of the Things of the Spirit, flowing from the Apprehenſion of them in the Mind. When the Light is diſcovered indeed, (and O! it is a pleaſant Thing for the Eye to behold it, as *Solomon* ſpeaks) then the Spirit hath found an Object ſuitable to its Nature, and ſo it reliſheth and delighteth in it: Therefore the Word is not ſimple *minding*, or thinking, but *ſavouring*, thinking with Affection upon them, taſting and feeding upon the Knowledge of them; it is a minding of them with Care and Delight, with Earneſtneſs, φεῦσατε, *O Taſte and ſee how good the Lord is*, Pſal. xxxiv. 8. Some Things cannot be indeed known but by ſome Senſe, you cannot make a blind Man apprehend what Light is, till he ſee it, a deaf Man cannot form a Notion of Sounds in his Mind, except he once heard them, neither can a Man underſtand the Sweetneſs of Honey, but by taſting it. Truly ſpiritual Things are of that Nature, there is ſome hidden Vertue and Excellency in them, which is not obvious to every Man that hath the bare Knowledge of the Letter, there is a Spirit and Life in them, that cannot be tranſmitted into your Ears with the Sound of Words, or infuſed into Ink and Paper; 'tis only the *Inſpiration of the Almighty* can inſpire this ſenſible Perception, and real Taſte of ſpiritual Things; ſome Powders do not ſwell till they be beaten; truly till theſe Truths be well powdered and beaten ſmall by Meditation, they cannot ſmell ſo fragrantly to the Spirit: As Meats do not nouriſh till they be chewed and digeſted, ſo ſpiritual Things do not reliſh to a Soul, nor can they truly feed the Soul, till they be chewed and digeſted into the Heart, by ſerious and earneſt Conſideration; this is that which makes theſe ſame Truths to be ſomeway not the ſame; theſe very Principles of Religion received and confeſſed by all, to be lively in one, and dead in another. It is the living Conſideration of living Truth, the Application of Truth to the Heart, that makes it lively in one; whereas others keep it only beſide them in a Corner of their Minds, or in a Book, in the Corner of the Houſe; the ſame Meat is laid to you all, the moſt Part look on it, others contemplate it, and exerciſe only their Underſtandings about it, but there are ſome who taſte it, and find Sweetneſs in it, who digeſt it by Meditation and ſolemn Avocation of their Hearts from the Things of the World; and therefore ſome are fed, ſome are ſtarved.

Need we to enlarge much upon this Subject? Is it not too too palpable that many who fill up our Churches, are in the Fleſh, becauſe they do mind and ſavour only the Things of the Fleſh, and not of the Spirit? Will you ſeriouſly ſearch your Hearts, ask what reliſhes moſt with them? Can you ſay, that it is *the Kingdom of God, or the Righteouſneſs thereof?* Or, is not rather theſe other Things of Food and Raiment and ſuch like, that have no Extent beyond this narrow Span of Time? I am perſuaded the Hearts of many taſte no Sweetneſs in Religion, elſe they would fix more upon it, and purſue it more earneſtly. Are not the Things of another World, the great Things of the Goſpel, counted all *ſtrange Things*, Hoſ. viii. 12. as Things that you have not much to do with? Do you not let the Officers of Jeſus Chriſt, all the ſweet Invitations of the Goſpel, paſs by, as Strangers, and as if ye were unconcerned

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in them? What Taſte have they more than the White of an Egg? How unſavoury a Diſcourſe or Thought to a carnal Heart is it, to ſpeak of ſubduing the Luſts of the Fleſh, of dying to the World, of the World to come? Who find their Hearts inwardly ſtirred, upon the Propoſal of Jeſus Chriſt? But if any matter of petty Gain were proffered, O! how would Men liſten with both their Ears? How beautiful in the Eyes of the covetous Mind is any Gain and Advantage? The Sound of Money is ſweeter to him than this bleſſed Sound of Peace and Salvation: How ſweet is Pleaſure to the voluptuous? What Suitableneſs and Conveniency is apprehended in theſe periſhing Things? But how little Moment or Weight is conceived and believed to be in Things eternal? O how ſubſtantial do Things viſible ſeem to Men, and how triffling do other Things inviſible appear? But for you whoſe Eyes are opened, to *you Chriſt is precious*, to you the Things of the Spirit are beautiful, and all your Grief is, that you cannot affect them according to their Worth, or love them according to their Beauty. I ſay, ſome there are, who do ſee a Subſtance and *Subſiſtance only in Things not ſeen*, Heb. xi. 1. And for Things that are ſeen and viſible in this World, they do account them Shadows only in Compariſon of Things inviſible. The World apprehends no Realities, but in what they ſee; but a Chriſtian apprehends no ſolid Reality in that he ſees, but only in that he ſees not; and therefore, as in his Judgment he looks upon the one as a Shadow, the other as a Subſtance; ſo he labours to proportion and conform his Affection to a ſuitable Intertainment of them, to give a Shadow or Show of Affection to the Things of this Life, but the Marrow and Subſtance of his Heart is to the Things inviſible of another Life: Thus the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* vii. 29, *&c. Rejoycing, as if we rejoyced not, enjoying, as if we poſſeſſed not, uſing, as if we uſed not*, half Acts for half Objects, if we give our whole Spirits, the Strength of our Souls and Minds to them, we are as fooliſh as he that ſtrikes with all his Strength at the Air, or a Feather; there is no Solidity or Reality in theſe Things, able to bottom much Eſtimation or Affection; only mind them, and uſe them as in the by, as in paſſing through towards your Country.

SERMON XVIII.

Verſe 5, 6. *For they that are after the Fleſh, do mind, &c. For to be carnally minded, is Death: But to be ſpiritually minded, is Life and Peace.*

THERE are many Differences among Men in this World, that, as to outward Appearance, are great and wide; and indeed they are ſo eagerly purſued, and ſeriouſly minded by Men, as if they were great and momentous. You ſee what

what a Strife and Contention there is among Men, how to be extracted out of the Dregs of the Multitude, and set a little higher in Dignity and Degree than they; how do Men affect to be honourable above the base? How do they seek to be Rich, and hate Poverty? These Differences of Poor and Rich, High and Low, Noble and Ignoble, Learned and Unlearned, the Thoughts of Men are wholly taken up with: But there is one great Difference, that is most in God's Eye, and is both substantial and eternal, and so infinitely surpasseth all these Differences that the Minds of Men most run out upon; and it is here, the great Difference between *Flesh* and *Spirit*, and them that are *after the Flesh*, and them that are *after the Spirit*. This is of all other most considerable, because widest, and durablest. I say, it is the widest of all, for all others put no great Difference between Men, as Men; they do reach the peculiar Excellency of a Man, that is, the true and proper and good of his spiritual and immortal Part; they are such as befalls alike to good and bad, and so cannot have either much good, or much evil in them. *I have seen Folly set in great Dignity, and Princes walking on Foot*, Eccl. x. 6, 7. Then certainly, such Titles of Honour and Dignity, such Places of Eminency, erected above the Multitude, have little or nothing worth the Spirit of a Man in them, seeing a Fool, a wicked Man, is as capable of them, as a wise Man or a princely Spirit; and so of all others, they do not elevate a Man, as a Man, above others. A poor, unlearned, mean Man may have more real Excellency in him, than a rich, learned, and great Person. But this draws a substantial and vast Difference indeed, such as is between *Flesh* and *Spirit*, such as is between Men and Beasts. You know what Preheminency a Man hath over a Beast; there is no such wide Distance among the Sons of Men, as between the lowest and meanest Man and the chiefest Beast; *There is a Spirit in Man*, saith *Elihu*, Job. xxxii. 8. an immortal, eternal Substance, of a far higher Nature and Comprehension. You know what Excellency is in the Spirit beyond the Flesh, such as is in Heaven beyond the Earth, for the one is breathed from Heaven, and the other is taken out of the *Dust of the Earth*; the one is corruptible, yea Corruption it self, the other incorruptible. How swift and nimble are the Motions of the Spirit, from the one End of Heaven to the other? How can it compass the Earth in a Moment? Do but look and see what a huge Difference is between a beautiful living Body, and the same when 'tis a dead Carcase, rotten and corrupted? It is the Spirit dwelling within, that makes the Odds, that makes it active, beautiful and comely; but in the Removal of the Spirit, it becometh a Piece of the most defiled and loathsome Dust in the World.

Now, I say, such a vast and wide Difference there is between a true Christian and a natural Man, even taking him in with all his common Indowments and Excellencies; the one is a Man, the other a Beast, the one is *after the Flesh*, the other *after the Spirit*. It is the ordinary Compellation of the Holy Ghost, *Man being in Honour, and understanding not, is like the Beasts that perish*, Psal. xlix. 20. and *Psal.* xciv. 9. *Understand ye brutish among the People*, &c. and *Psal.* xcii. 6. *The brutish Man understands not this*: And *Eccl.* iii. 18. *That they themselves may know that they are but Beasts*. Therefore you find the

the Lord often turning to Beasts, to insensible Creatures, thereby to reprove the Folly and Madness of Men, *Isa.* i. 2. and *Jer.* viii. 7. Man hath two Parts in him, by which he hath Affinity to the two most distant Natures, he stands in the Middle between Angels and Beasts; in his Spirit he riseth up to an angelick Dignity, and in his Body he falls down to a brutish Condition. Now, which of these hath the Preheminency, that he is? If the Spirit be indeed elevated above all sensual and earthly Things, to the Life of Angels, that is, to Communion with God; then a Man is one *after the Spirit*, an Angel incarnate, an Angel dwelling in Flesh; but if his Spirit throw it self down to the Service of the Flesh, minding and savouring only Things sensual and visible, then indeed a Man puts off Humanity, and hath associated himself to Beasts, to be as one of them. And indeed, a Man made thus like a Beast, is worse than a Beast, because he ought be far better. It is no Disparagement to a Beast to mind only the Flesh, but it is the greatest Abasement of a Man, that which draws him down from that higher Station God had set him into, to the lowest Station, that of Beasts; and truly a *Nebuchadnezzar* among Beasts, is the greatest Beast of all, far more brutish than any Beast. Now such is every Man by Nature, that *which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh*; even Man, as he comes out of the Womb, is degenerated, and fallen down into this brutish Estate, to mind, to savour, to relish nothing, but what relates to this fleshly or temporal Being. The utmost Sphere, and Comprehension of Man, is now of no larger Extent than this visible World, and this present Life: *He is blind, and seeth not far off*, 2 Pet. i. 9. Truly, such is every Man by Nature; whereas the proper native Sphere of the Spirit's Motion and Comperehension, is as large, as its Endurance, that is, as long as Eternity, and as broad as to reach the Infiniteness of God, the God of all Spirits. Now, through the Slavery and Bondage of Mens Spirits to their Flesh, 'tis contracted into as narrow Bounds, as this poor Life in the Flesh; he that ought to look beyond Time, as far as Eternity, and hath an immortal Spirit given for that End, he is now half blind; the Eye of the Mind is so over-clouded with Lusts and Passions, that it cannot see far off, not so far as to the Morrow after Death, not so far as to the Entry of Eternity. And truly, if you compare the Context, you will find, that whosoever doth not *give all Diligence to add to Faith, Vertue, to Vertue, Knowledge, to Knowledge, Temperance, to Temperance, Patience, and to Patience, Godliness*, &c. He that is not exercised and imployed about this Study, how to adorn his Spirit with these Graces, how to have a Victory over himself and the World, and in respect of these, accounts all Things, beside, indifferent, such a Man *is blind, and seeth not far off*; he hath not gotten the Sight of Eternity, he hath not taken up that everlasting Endurance, else he could not spend his Time upon Provision for the Lusts of the Flesh, but he behoved to *lay such a good Foundation for the Time to come*, as is here mentioned: If he saw afar off, he could not but make Acquaintance with those Courtiers of Heaven, which will minister an Entrance into that everlasting Kingdom. But truly, while this is not your Study, you have no Purpose for Heaven, you see nothing but what is just before your Eye, and almost toucheth it; and so you savour and mind only what you see.

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Is not this then a wide Difference between the Children of this World, and the Children of God? Is it not very substantial? All others are circumstantial in respect of this, this only puts a real Difference in that which is best in Men, *viz.* their Spirits. The Excellency of Nature is known by their Affections and Motions; so are these here, *the spritual Man savours spirital Things, the carnal Man carnal Things*; every thing sympathizes with that which is like itself, and is ready to incorporate into it: Things are nourished and preserved by Things like themselves. You see the Swine embraces the Dung-hill, that Stink is only a savoury Smell to them, because 'tis suitable to their Nature: But a Man hath a more excellent Taste and Smell, and he savours finer and sweeter Things: Truly it cannot choose, but that it must be a Nature more swinish, or brutish than a Swine, that can relish and savour such filthy abominable Works of the Flesh, as abound amongst some of you. *The Works of the Flesh are manifest*, Gal. v. 19. And indeed they are manifest upon you, acted in the very Day-time, out-facing the very Light of the Gospel; you may read them, and see if they be not too manifest in you. Now, what a base Nature, what abominable and brutish Spirits must possess Men, that they apprehend a Sweetness and Fragrancy in these corrupt and stinking Works of the old Man? O how base a Scent is it, to smell and savour nothing but this present World, and Satisfaction to your Senses? Truly your Scent and Smell, your Relish and Taste, argues your base degenerate and brutish Natures, that you are on the worse Side of this Division, *after the Flesh*. But alas, it is not posible to persuade you that there is no Sweetness, no Fragrancy, nothing but Corruption and Rottenness, such as comes out of Sepulchres opened, in all these Works of the Flesh, till once a new Spirit be put in you, and your Natures changed; no more than you can by Eloquence persuade a sick Man, whose Pallate is possessed with a vitiated bitter Humour, that such Things as are suitable to his vitiated Taste, are indeed bitter; or make a Swine to believe that the Dung-hill is stinking and unpleasant. Truly it is as impossible to make the Multitude of Men to apprehend, to relish or savour any Bitterness or Loathsomness in the Ways and Courses they follow, or any Sweetness and Fragrancy in the Ways of Godliness, till once your Tastes be rectified, your Spirits be transformed and renewed.

And indeed, when once the Spirit is renewed, and dispossessed of that malignant Humour of Corruption, and fleshly Affection, that did present all Things, contrary to what they are, then it is like a healthful and wholsome Pallat, that tastes all Things as they are, and finds bitter bitter, and sweet sweet; or like a sound Eye, that beholds Things just as they are, both in Colour, Quantity, and Distance: Then the Soul savours the sweet Smell of the Fruits of the Spirit, *Verse* 22. *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Meekness, Temperance*, &c. These are fragrant and sweet to the Soul, and as a sweet Perfume, both to the Person that hath them, and to others round about him, and to God also; these cast a Savour, that allures a Soul to seek them, and being possessed of them, they cast a sweet Smell abroad to all that are round about, and even as high as Heaven; a Soul that hath these planted in it, and growing out of it, is *as a Garden inclosed* to God. These Fruits are both pleasant and sweet to the Soul that eats

them, and as the Pleasantness of the Apple allured Man to taste it, and Sin, so the Beauty and Sweetness of these Fruits of the Spirit, draws the Spirit of a Man after them; he hath found the Savour, and seen the Beauty, and this allures him to taste them, and then he invites the well-beloved to come and taste also, to eat of these Fruits with him. We might instance this in many Things, a Christian relishes more Sweetness in Temperance, in beating down his Body, and bringing it into Subjection, in abstaining from fleshly Lusts, than a carnal Man tastes in the most exquisite Pleasures that the World can afford. A Christian he savours a Sweetness in Meekness and Long-suffering, he hath more Delight in forgiving, and forbearing, and praying for them that wrong him, than a natural Man hath in the accomplishing of the most greedy Desires of Revenge. O what Beauty hath Gentleness, Goodness and Patience, in his Eye? What Sweetness is in the Love of God to his Taste? How ravishing is the Joy of the Holy Ghost? How contenting that Peace that passeth Understanding? These are Things of the Spirit, that he minds and savours. Know, Christians, that it is to this ye are called, to mind these Things most, and to seek them most; beware lest the Deceitfulness of Sin intice you, through the treacherous and deceitful Lusts that are yet living in your Members. If you indeed mind these Things, and out of the Appprehension of the Beauty and Savour of the Sweetness, and Smell of the Fragrancy of them, would be content to quite all your corrupt Lusts, for to be possessed with them, then you are on that blessed and happy Side of this great and fundamental Division of Men; you have indeed the Privilege of all others who are not renewed; whatever be your Condition in the World, you are of the *Spirit*; and this is better than to be rich, wise, great and honourable: God hath not given you such Things as the World go mad after; but envy them not, he hath given you better Things, more real and substantial Things, that makes you far better and more exellent.

But then, this Difference, as it is the widest, so it is the durablest; as it is substantial here, so it is perpetual hereafter. When all the other Differences between Men shall be abolished, this alone shall remain; and therefore you have it in the next Verse, *To be carnally minded is Death, but to be spiritually minded is Life and Peace.* This Division that is begun here, shall grow wider for all Eternity; there shall be a greater Difference after this Life, and a more sensible Separation: Death and Life, eternal Death and eternal Life, are the two Sides of this Difference, as it shall shortly be stated. When all other Degrees and Distances of Men shall be blotted out and buried in eternal Oblivion, there shall no Vestige or Mark remain, of either Wisdom, or Riches, or Honour, or such like, but all Mankind shall be, as to these outward Things, levelled and equalized; this one unseen and neglected Difference in the World, shall appear and shine, *in that Day when the Lord maketh up his Jewels; then he will discern between the Righteous and the Wicked, between him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not,* Mal. iii. 18. The carnal and spiritual Man have opposite Affections and Motions; the Spirit of the one is on a Journey or Walk upward, *after the Spirit,* and the Spirit of the other is on a Walk downward, *towards the Flesh*; and the further they go, the further distant they are: The one shall be taken up to the Com-

Company of the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, and to the Fellowſhip of Angels, the other ſhall be thrown down into the Fellowſhip and Society of Devils: And truly it is no Wonder it fall ſo low, for all its Motions in the Body was downward, to the *fulfilling of the Luſts of the Fleſh*. Thus you ſee the Difference will grow wider and more ſenſible than it is yet between the godly and ungodly; in this World it doth not ſo evidently appear, as it will do afterward. As two Men, that leave one another, and have their Faces on contrary Airts, at the Beginning the Diſtance and Difference is not ſo great, and ſo ſenſible; but wait a little, and the further they go, the further they are diſtant, and the wider their Separation is. Even ſo, when a Chriſtian begins to break off his Way, from the common Courſe of the World, it doth not appear to be ſo different from it, as to convince himſelf and others; but if his Face be towards *Jeruſalem* above, and his Heart thitherward, certainly he will be daily moving further from the World, till the Diſtance be ſenſible both to himſelf and others; he will be more and more transformed and renewed, till at Length all be changed. No Wonder then, that theſe two cannot meet together in the End of their Courſe, whoſe Courſe was ſo oppoſite: Though wicked Men will deſire to *die the Death of the Righteous*, yet it is no more poſſible they can meet in the End, than Hell and Heaven can reconcile together, becauſe they walk to two contrary Points.

SERMON XIX.

Verſe 6. *For to be carnally minded, is Death: But to be ſpiritually minded, is Life and Peace.*

IT is true, this Time is ſhort, and ſo ſhort that ſcarce can Similitudes or Compariſons be had to ſhadow it out unto us; 'tis a *Dream*, a *Moment*, a *Vapour*, a *Flood*, a *Flower*, and whatſoever can be more fading or periſhing; and therefore it is not in itſelf very conſiderable, yet in another reſpect it is of all Things the moſt precious, and worthy of the deepeſt Attention and moſt ſerious Conſideration; and that is, becauſe it is linked unto Eternity; there is an Indiſſolvable Knot between them, that no Power or Art can break or looſe. The Beginning of Eternity is continually united to the End of Time; and you know all the infinite Extenſion of Eternity is uniform, it admits of no Change in it from better to worſe, or worſe to better; and therefore the Beginning of our Eternity, whether it be Happineſs or Miſery, is but one perpetuated and eternized Moment, ſo to ſpeak. Seeing then we are into the Body, and ſent unto the World for this

End, that we may pass through into an unchangeable eternal Estate; truly, of all Things it is most concerning and weighty, what Way we choose to this Journey's End: Seeing the Time is short, in which we have to walk, and it is uncertain too, we ought, as the Apostle *Peter* speaks, *give all Diligence*; as long as the Day remains, we should drive the harder, lest that eternal Night overtake us. The Shortness and Uncertainty of Time should constrain us to take the present Opportunity, and not to let it slip over as we do; seeing it is not at all in our Hand, either what is past, or what is to come, the one cannot be recalled, the other is not in our Power, to call and bring forward, therefore the present Moment that God hath given us, should be catched hold on, and *redeemed*, as the Apostle speaks, *Eph.* v. 16. We should buy it at the dearest Rate of Pains and Expences, from all those vain, impertinent, and trifling Diversions, that take it up, that we may imploy it as it becomes, suitable to Eternity that is posting on. And then, as the Shortness of it makes it the more precious and considerable, in regard of the End of it, *Eternity*; as the Scantiness of a Thing increases the Rate of it, so that same Consideration should make all worldly Things, that are confined either in their Being, or Use, within it, to be inconsiderable, as *Paul*, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. shews, seeing the *Time is short, it remaineth, that we should rejoice, as not rejoicing*; *weep, as not weeping*; *buy, as if we possessed not*; *use the World, as not abusing it*: Seeing all its Worth is to be esteemed from the End of it, Eternity, never ending; then certainly whatsoever in Time doth not reach that End, and hath no Connexion with it, we should give it but such Entertainment, as a passing Bird, that is pleasant to the Eye, gets of a Beholder, while it is in its Flight: The Shortness of the Day should make us double our Diligence, and put on the harder in our Walk or Race, that so we may come in Time to our Place of Rest; and that same should make the Passenger give an overly and passing Look to all Things that are by the Way, and which he must of Necessity leave behind him. Seeing these Things then are so important, let us draw our Hearts together to consider what the Lord speaks to us in this Word, for in it you have two Ways, and two Ends, opposite and contrary Ways and Walks, and as contrary Ends; the Ways are, *walking after the Flesh*, and *walking after the Spirit*; the Ends to which they lead, are *Death* and *Life*. We spoke something of the Ways, and the wide Difference that is between them, what Excellency is in the one beyond the other; but truly it is hard to persuade you to leave off your accustomed Ways and Walks, because your inward Sense, and the Inclination of your Hearts is wholly perverted and corruped by Nature. You know the moving Faculty is subordinate in its Operations unto the knowing, feeling, and apprehending Faculties: The locomotive Power is given for a Subsidiary and Help to the apprehensive and appetitive Powers, because Things are convenient and disconvenient, good or evil, to the Nature of the living Creature, without it; and it could not by meer Knowledge, or Desire, or Hatred of Things, either come into Possession of them, or eschew them; therefore God hath given them a Faculty of moving themselves to the Prosecution and Attainment of any apprehended Good, or to the eschewing and Aversion of any conceived Evil. Thus, when Beasts savour or smell that Food which

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is fit for them, their Appetite ſtirs them up to Motion after it, to obtain it. Now, I ſay, if this inward Senſe be corrupted, then Things that are deſtructive will be conceived good, becauſe they are ſuitable to that corrupt Humour or Quality that poſſeſſes the Senſes; and thus all the Motion and Walk will be diſordered. The Truth is, my Beloved, our Spirits and Minds are infected with a poiſonable Humour, fleſhly Paſſions and Luſts are predominant naturally; and, as in them that are in a Fever, their Organs being diſtempered with a bitter unſavoury Humour, the pleaſanteſt Things ſeem unſavoury, becauſe not ſuitable to that predominant Humour; even ſo it is with you by Nature. That which puts all upon Motion is out of Courſe, ſince the firſt Diſtemper of Man; your Spirits and Minds are fleſhly and carnal, they have ſtrong and deep Impreſſion of all the Luſts that are in the Body, and are accordingly affected; and therefore you cannot fitly judge what is good or evil for you, but according to theſe, *Iſa.* v. 20. You muſt *call evil good, and good evil, bitter ſweet, and ſweet bitter,* becauſe you are already prepoſſeſſed thus. And therefore the Ways of the Fleſh, thoſe Paths that lead to Deſtruction, you cannot but look on them as pleaſant, becauſe they ſuit and pleaſe your corrupted Senſe or Spirit; and ſo this diſordered Savour or Smell of ſome fragrant Perfume in the Ways of the Fleſh, puts you upon walking in theſe Ways; and being thus poſſeſſed and engaged, you cannot but ſtop your Ears to all contrary Perſuaſions; you think it againſt your Senſe and Reaſon, to tell you that theſe are loathſome and unſavoury, and that the other Ways of Wiſdom and Spirit, are Pleaſantneſs and Peace. I ſay, you cannot believe this, till your Hearts and Spirits be purged, and your Taſte be pure and uncorrupted. It is certainly upon this Ground, that our Saviour puts ſuch Characters upon the Way to Heaven and Hell, to Life and Death; the one is *ſtrait and narrow, and few walk in it,* the other *broad and eaſy, and many walk in it,* Mat. vii. 13. Certainly, it is not the Way in itſelf ſimply, that admits of ſuch a Motion, to ſpeak properly, as the Thing is; the Way to Life, by the guiding of the Spirit, is eaſieſt, plaineſt, ſhorteſt and broadeſt: It hath all the Properties of a good Way, none ſo pleaſant and plain; how ſweet and pleaſant Sights all the Way! 'Tis an Alley of Delight; the Way of his Commandments it wants not Accommodation in it to refreſh the Traveller; the moſt delightful Company is here; the Father and the Son, who ſought no other Company from all Eternity, but were abundantly ſatisfied and rejoiced in one another: This Fellowſhip the Chriſtian hath to ſolace himſelf with, and he is admitted to be Partaker of that Joy. There is nothing that doth disburden the Soul ſo of Care and Anxiety, nothing doth rid a Man of ſo many Perplexities and Troubles as this Way. But the Way of Sin in it ſelf is moſt laborious, moſt difficult: It hath infinite By-ways that it leads a Man into, and he muſt turn and return, and run in a Circle all the Day, all his Time, to ſatisfy the infinite Luſts and inſatiable Deſires of Sin. O! how painful and laborious is it to fulfil the Luſts of the Fleſh? How much Service doth it impoſe? How ſerious Attention? What perplexing Cares and tormenting Thoughts? How many Sorrows and Griefs are in every Step of this Way? Do you not perceive what Drudges and Slaves Sin makes you? How much Labour you have to ſatisfy your Luſts? And

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you are always to begin, as near that which you ſeek in the End of your Years, as in the Beginning. How thorny, how miry is the Way of Covetouſneſs? Are you not always out of one Thorn into another, and cut aſunder, or *pierced through with many Sorrows*, 1. Tim. vi. 10. Mat. xiii. 22. Is that a pleaſant and eaſy Way, I pray you, that makes all your Sorrow and your Travel Grief, and *ſuffers not your Heart to take reſt in the Night*? Eccl. ii. 22, 23. What Pains of Body? What plotting of Mind? What Labour and Vexation of both, muſt a Sinner have as his conſtant Attendance in this Way? The Way is intricate, deep, unpaſſable, that leads to that Satisfaction you deſire to your Luſts; your Deſires are impotent and impatient, the Means to carry you on are weak and lame, noways accommodate or fit for ſuch a Journey; and this puts you always, as it were, on the Rack, tormented between the Impatience of your Luſts, and the Impotency of Means, and Impoſſibility to fulfil them. Deſires and Diſappointments, Hopes and Fears, divide your Souls between them: Such is the Way after the Fleſh, an endleſs Labyrinth of Woes and Miſeries, of Pains and Cares, ever while here.

But theſe Ways receive ſuch Names from the common Opinion and Apprehenſion of Men, becauſe of our Fleſh, which is predominant; the Way after the Fleſh being ſuitable to it, though in itſelf infinitely more toilſome, ſeems eaſy and plain; but the Way after the Spirit ſeems ſtrait, narrow, toilſome and laborious. Though there be infinite more Room in the Way to Life, becauſe it leads to that immenſe univerſal Good, it expatiates towards the *All-fulneſs* of God; yet to Fleſh, how narrow and ſtrait is it, becauſe it cannot admit of theſe inordinate Luſts, that have ſwelled ſo immeaſurably towards narrow and ſcanty Things? The true Latitude of the Way of the Fleſh is not great, for it is all incloſed within poor, lean, narrow, created Objects; but becauſe the Imagination of Men ſupplies what is wanting really, and fancies an infinite or boundleſs Extent of Goodneſs in theſe Things; therefore the Sinner walks eaſily, without ſtraitning to his Fleſh, it is not pinched in this Way of fleſhly Luſts. But alas! the Spirit is wofully ſtraitned, fettered and impriſoned, though it be not ſenſibly found.

What is the Reaſon then that ſo many walk in the Way to Death; but becauſe their Fleſh finds no ſtraitning, no Preſſure in it? It is an eaſy Way to their Natures, becauſe ſuitable to the Corruption that is in them; therefore Men walk on without Conſideration of what follows: 'Tis like a Deſcent, or going down a Hill, and ſo eaſy to our Fleſh. On the other Hand, the Way to Life, *after the Spirit*, is an Aſcent upward, and it is very difficult to our earthy and lumpiſh Fleſh. Our Spirits, by Communion with and Subjection to the Fleſh, are made of an earthly Quality, near the Element of the Fleſh, and ſo they bow naturally downward; but if once they were purified and purged, and unfettered by the Spirit of God, and reſtored to their native Purity, they would more eaſily and willingly move upward, as you ſee the Flame doth: And till this be done in you, we cannot expect that you will willingly and pleaſantly walk in theſe pleaſant Walks *after the Spirit*; your Walk will never be free and unconſtrained in the Paths of Godlineſs. You may, from ſome external Motives and Impulſes, move upward for a Seaſon, in ſome particular Duties of Religion, as a Stone caſt up; but as that Impreſſion is not from an inward

inward Principle, ſo it will not be conſtant and durable, but you will fall down to your old Byaſs in other Things, and move quite contrary, when the external Impreſſion of Fear or Favour, of Cuſtom or Education, or ſuch like, wears out. But the true Chriſtian hath a Spirit within him, the Root of the Matter in him; this carries him upward in the Ways of Obedience, after the Motions and Directions of God's Spirit. At the Beginning, indeed, it is ſtrait and uneaſy to his Fleſh, but the Difficulty is overcome, if once you begin well: The Beginning (as you uſe to ſay) is the Half of the Whole. Truly, to be well entred, is half Progreſs, afterward the bulkſome and burdenſome Luſts of the Fleſh are ſtript off, at leaſt in a greater Meaſure, and then the Spirit moves eaſily and willingly; this Walk becomes a Recreation, that at firſt was a Labour. Now *Delight* and *Deſire* are as *Wings* to mount the Soul aloft: Now 'tis the good Pleaſure of the Soul to Walk to all Well-pleaſing. Indeed the Way of this World is dirty and filthy; and therefore a Chriſtian had need to watch continually, and to gird up his Loins, that his Thoughts and Affections hang not down to the Earth, elſe they will take up much Filth, and cannot but clog and burden the Spirit, and make it drive heavily and ſlowly, as *Pharaoh* did his Chariots when the Wheels were off. We had need to fly aloft above the Ground, and not to come down too low near it, thinking withal to double out our Journey, for we ſhall find, that becauſe of the Remnants of Fleſh within us, that this World hath a magnetical attractive Vertue to draw us down to it, if we be within the Sphere of its Activity. It is not good coming near Fire with Flax; we would endeavour to keep our Hearts at much Diſtance, and diſingage them from lower Conſolations. This World is like the peſtiferous Lake of *Sodom*, that kills all that flies over it, and makes them fall down into it. If we fly low upon the Surface of it, we cannot think but that the ſpiritual Life will be much extinguiſhed. But to prevent this, we would take our Flight ſtraight upward after the Spirit, (for that is the proper Motion of the more pure and ſpiritual Part of this World) and give no reſt, till we be out of the Reach of that Infection, till you be fully eſcaped the Pollutions of the World.

But if you cannot be perſuaded to come off this Way, that ſeems ſo pleaſant to your Fleſh, that Way which is the very Courſe of the World, (for theſe are joined, *Eph.* ii. 2.) Then I beſeech you, ſtand ſtill, and conſider whither it will lead; do but ſtop a little, and bethink your ſelves ſadly and ſeriouſly, whither this will take you, where it ſhall end. And truly that is dreadful, the End of it is Death, a never-ending Death. I am ſure, if you were walking by the Way, and one came and told you gravely and ſeriouſly, that that Way is full of dangerous Pits, that there are many Robbers in it, waiting to cut your Throat, you would count the Admonition worthy of ſo much Notice, as to halt and conſider what to do: But now, when the Lord himſelf, that deſerves infinite more Reſpect and Credit than Men, gives you Warning once, and often, Day after Day repeats this Admonition to you, ſends out many Ambaſſadors to call you off, makes this Word to ſound daily in your Ears, *Oh! why will you die? Such Ways lead down to the Chambers of Death and Hell; to be carnally minded,* in the Iſſue, *is Death,* whatſoever you may promiſe to your ſelves. I ſay, when he makes a Voice to

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accompany us in all our Walkings, this is not the Way that leads to Life; why do you not think it worthy of ſo much Conſideration, as once to ſtop and ſift your Progreſs, till you examine what will come of it? Are we ſo credulous to Men, and ſhall we not believe God, who is *Truth it ſelf*, who affirms it ſo conſtantly, and obteſts us ſo earneſtly? Are we ſo wiſe and prudent in leſſer Things, and ſhall we be mad, ſelf-willed and refractory, in the greateſt Thing that concerns us eternally? O! *Unbelief* is that which will condemn the World, the Unbelief of this one Thing, that the walking after, and minding of the Fleſh is mortal and deadly. Tho' all Men confeſs with their Tongues this to be a Truth, yet it is not really believed; the deep Inconſideration and ſlight Apprehenſion of this Truth, makes Men boldly to walk, and violently to run on to Perdition. Did you indeed believe that eternal Miſery is before you at the End of this Way; and would you be ſo cruel to your ſelves, as to walk in it, for any Allurement that is in it? did you really believe, that there is a Precipice into utter Darkneſs and everlaſting Death at the End of this Alley; would the Pleaſure and Sweetneſs of it be able to infatuate you, and beſot you ſo far, as to lead you on into it, like an Ox to the Slaughter, and a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks? It is ſtrange indeed, tho' you neither will believe that Death is the End of theſe Things, nor yet can you be perſuaded, that you do not believe it. There is a twofold Deluſion that poſſeſſes the Hearts of Men; one is, a Dream and Fancy of eſcaping Death, tho they live in Sin; another is, a Dream and Fancy that they do believe that Death is the Wages of Sin: We might wonder how they conſiſt together, if we did not find it by ſo many Experiences. Your Way proves that you do not believe it, that Death is the End of it; and then your Words evidence that you do not believe, that you are Unbelievers of that. O! how deſperate is the Wickedneſs, and how great is the Deceitfulneſs of the Heart? The falſe Prophet that is in every Man's Boſom deceives him, that it may deſtroy him. As Satan is a Lier and a Murderer, and murders by lying, ſo the Heart of Man is a Self-murderer and Self-deſtroyer, and that is done by lying and deceiving: There is ſome Ly in every Sin, but there is this groſs black fundamental Ly at the Bottom of all Sin, a Conceit of Immunity and Freedom from Death and Hell; a ſtrong Imagination of eſcaping Danger, even tho' ſuch a Way be choſen and walked into, as of its own Nature inevitably leads to Deſtruction: And there is ſomething of this bloody murdering Flattery even in the Hearts of Chriſtians; therefore this Apoſtle gives us an Antidote againſt it, and labours often to purge it out, by ſtirring up that Knowledge they have received. *Know you not, that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God?* 1 Cor. vi. 9. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for what a Man ſoweth, that he ſhall reap; he that ſoweth to the Fleſh, ſhall reap Corruption*, &c. Gal. vi. 7, 8. O! that you might liſten to this Word, to this Watch-word given you, and ſtop your Courſe, at leaſt for a Seaſon, to think what ſhall be the latter End; know you not, that ſuch ſhall not inherit the Kingdom? Know you not, that the Way to Heaven lies upward? Know you not that *your Way* lies downward towards the Fleſh and the Earth? Are you ſo far demented, as to think to come to Heaven by walking juſt downward in the Luſts

Lusts of the Flesh? Truly this is the strongest and strangest Inchantment that can be, that you think to sow one Thing and reap another Thing; to sow Darkness and reap Light; to sow Corruption, and reap Incorruption. Is that possible in Nature, to sow Nettle-seed, and think to reap Barley or Wheat? Be not deceived. *O!* that you would undeceive your poor deluded Souls, and know that it is as natural for Death and Hell to grow out of Sin, and walking after the Flesh, as it is for every Seed to yield its own Fruit and Herb. Do you then think to dissolve the Course and Order of Nature? Truly the Flesh is mortal in itself, 'tis ordained for Corruption, you see what it turns to after the Life is out, that is an Emblem of the State of the fleshly Soul after Death. As you did abase your Spirits to the Service of the Flesh here, and all your plowing and labouring and sowing was about it, the Seed which you did cast in the Ground was fleshly Lusts, earthly Things, for the Satisfaction of your Flesh; so you shall reap of the Flesh, Corruption, Death and Destruction, that shall make your immortal Spirits mortal and corruptible, and subject them to Death and Corruption with the Body, as far as they are capable; it shall deprive them of all that which is their proper Life and Refreshment, and separate them eternally from the Fountain of Blessedness, and banish them out of Heaven, unto the Fellowship of Devils. And, O! that Corruption of the incorup. tible Spirit, is worse than the Corruption of the mortal Flesh, *corruptio optimi pessima.*

Now, whoever of you is thus far undeceived, as to believe your Danger and Misery, and to discern that inbred Delusion of your Hearts, be not discouraged utterly, there may be Hope of Recovery, when you see your Disease. I say, if you see that Hell is at the End of your Way, then know that he who sent that Voice to call you off that Way of Death, he leaves you not to your own Wits to guide you into the right Way, but he follows with a Voice behind you, saying, *Here is the Way, walk in it,* turn not out of it to the right Hand or left. And this Voice sounds plainly in the Word, and it is nothing else but the Sound of the Gospel, that blessed Sound that invites and allures you to come in to Jesus Christ, *the Way, Truth and Life,* the true Way to the true Life. All other Ways, all other Lives, have no Truth in them, 'tis but a Cloud, a Fancy that Men apprehend and lay hold on. But come to this Way, and it will truly lead thee to the true Life, eternal Life; if you flie unto him out of the Apprehension of your Danger, you have a clear Way to come to God, and as plain a Way to attain Life and Peace. Being in Christ, you have Assurance of not falling into Condemnation. He is such a Way as will hold you in, and not suffer you to go out of it again to the Way of Death. And therefore he will give you a Tutor, a Guider and Director in this Way to Life and Peace, and that is the Holy Spirit, *to lead in all Truth, and to guide your Feet in the Way of his Commandments.* So that in this new and living Way of Christ, you shall have both the Light of the Word, to know where to walk, and Life of the Spirit to make you walk toward that eternal Life; and thus *Grace and Truth is come by Christ.* Indeed you must suffer the Mortification of your Flesh, you must endure the Pain of the Death of your Lusts, the cutting off your right Hand, and plucking out your right Eye, which would make you offend and

ſtumble in the Way; but let the Remembrance of the Life to come ſweeten it all. When Men undergo the Hazard of loſing Life for a little Pleaſure, when for a poor petty Advantage, Men will endure ſo much Pains and Trouble; O! what ſhould *eternal Life*, and ſuch a Life as the beſt Life here is but Death to it? How ſhould it mitigate and ſweeten the Bitterneſs of Mortification? How ſhould it fortify our Spirits to much Endurance and Patience? A Battle we muſt have for theſe Luſts that we diſingage from the Devil, and the World beſides will lay wait for us in this Way: But when for ſuch ſmall and inconſiderable Advantages, Men will endure all the Diſadvantages of War, of a long War; O how ſhould the Expectation of this Peace, which incloſes and comprehends all Felicity, all Well-being, animate and ſtrengthen us to fight in into the City of Life and Peace eternal.

SERMON XX.

Verſe 7. *Becauſe the carnal Mind is Enmity againſt God, and is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.*

UNbelief is that which condemns the World, it involves in more Condemnation than many other Sins; not only becauſe more univerſal, but eſpecially becauſe it ſhuts up Men in their Miſery, and ſecludes them from the Remedy that is brought to Light in the Goſpel. By Unbelief, I mean not only that careleſs Neglect of Jeſus Chriſt offered for Salvation, but that which is the Root of that, the Inconſideration and Ignorance of our deſperate Sinfulneſs and irremedileſs Miſery without Chriſt; which not being laid to Heart ſeriouſly, makes ſuch ſlight and ſuperficial Entertainment of a Saviour and Redeemer. Man is truly miſerable and unhappy, whether he know it not; but truly it is an Acceſſion to his Miſery, that he knows it not, that he neither apprehends what he is now by Nature, nor what he muſt ſhortly be made by Juſtice. Indeed, if there were no Remedy to be found, it were a happy Ignorance to be ignorant of Miſery: The Knowledge and Remembrance of it could do nothing but add unto the Bitterneſs of it: If a Man might bury it in eternal Forgetfulneſs, it were ſome Eaſe: But now, when God hath in his Mercy ſo appointed it, that the Beginning of the Belief of Sin and Miſery, ſhall, in a Manner, be the End of Miſery; and ſeeing, whether Men know it or not, they muſt ſhortly be made ſenſible of it, when there is no Remedy to be found: Then certainly it is the Height of Man's Miſery, that he knows and conſiders it not. If we would apply our Hearts at length to *hear what God the Lord ſpeaks*, for he only can give Account of Man to himſelf, we might have a Survey of

of both, in these Words and the preceeding, of our desperate Wickedness, and of our intolerable Misery; for the present, by Nature we are Enemies to God, and shortly we must be dealt with as Enemies, as Rebels to the most potent and glorious King, be punished with Death, an endless living Death. Experience shews how hard a Thing it is to persuade you, that you are really under the Sentence of Death: You will not suffer your Hearts to believe your Danger, lest it interrupt your present Pleasures of Sin. Nay, you will flatter your selves with the fancied Hope of Immunity from this Curse, and account it a cruel and rigorous Doctrine, that so many Creatures made by God, should be eternally miserable, or a Sentence of it should be past on all Flesh. Now, that which makes us hardly to believe this, is the Unbelief and deep Inconsideration of your Sinfulness; therefore the Apostle, to make Way for the former, adds, *Because the carnal Mind is Enmity against God.* Do not wonder then that your Ways and Courses, your Affections and Inclinations bring forth that ghostly and dreadful End of Death; seeing all these are Enmity to the greatest King, who alone hath the Power of Life and Death: They have a perfect Contrariety to his holy Nature and righteous Will; not only is the *carnal Mind an* Enemy, but *Enmity* itself, and therefore it is most suitable, that the sovereign Power of that *King of Kings*, stretched out to the Vindication of his Holiness and Righteousness, by *taking Vengeance on all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men.* If Rebellion in a State or Monarchy, against these petty mortal Gods, who *shall die as Men*, be so hainous, as to deserve Death, by the Consent of all Nations, how much more shall Enmity and Rebellion against the immortal, eternal King, who hath absolute Right and Dominion over his Creatures, as over the Clay, have such a suitable Recompence of eternal Death? Now, my Beloved, if you once believed this, the Enmity and Opposition of your whole Natures to God, you could not but fearfully apprehend what might be the Issue of it; you could not bless your selves as you do, and put the evil Day far off; but certainly you would be affrighted with the Terror and Majesty of that God you have to do with, whom, *when he awakes to Judgment*, you can neither resist nor escape; no standing against his Wrath, and no flying from it out of his Dominions; and this would dispose and incline your Minds in Time to hearken to the Treaty of Peace, which is holden out in the Gospel, and to lay down the Weapons of your Enmity, and make Peace with him in his Son the *Peace-maker.*

Amity and Unity is the very Being and Beauty of the World: This Universe is made up of innumerable different Kinds and Natures, and all these climb and walk together by the Bond of Peace and Concord among themselves, and with that *one high Understanding* that directs all, and supreme Will of God that moves all. It is that Link of Union with God, that gives and preserves Being and Beauty in all the Creatures, as the Dependance of the Ray upon the Sun, or the Stream on the Fountain, makes them what they are, which being interrupted, they cease to be what they were: *All Things continue as thou hast ordained them, for all are thy Servants*, Psal. cxix. 91. You see then this Amity and Union of Subordination of the Creatures to God is not dissolved to this Day: But woful and wretched Man alone hath withdrawn from this Subordi-

nation, and dissolved this sacred Tie of happy Friendship, which at first he was lifted up unto, and privileged with. Amity and Friendship, you know, consists in an Union of Hearts and Wills, and a Communion of all good Things; it makes two one, as much as two can be, by the Conspiracy of their Affections in one Thing, and the joint Concurrence of their Endeavours to communicate to one another what each hath; it takes away *Propriety*, and it makes a *Community* between Persons. Now, how happy was that Amity? How blessed that Friendship between God and Man? Tho' Man's Goodness could not extend to God, yet his Soul united to God by Love and Delight, and all that God had given him, returning that to the proper Owner, acknowledging his absolute Dependance on him, and claiming Interest and Propriety in nothing, not in himself. And then on the other Hand, the Love and Good-will of the infinite God placed on Man, and from that Fountain all the Streams of Happiness issuing forth towards Man, the Fulness of God opening up itself to him, and laying out itself towards him, God so far descending, as, in a Manner, to become the Creature's, to expose and dispose himself, and all in him, for poor Man's Use and Comfort.

How joyful was that Amity! but the breaking of this Bond of Peace is as sad and grievous. There was a woful Interposal between God and us, which hath separated these chief Friends ever since the Beginning, and that is *Sin*, the Seeds of all Enmity and Discord: This hath rent asunder the Bond of Amity, this hath made such a total Aversion of the Soul from God, and imprinted such an irreconcilable Enmity in the Heart against the holy Will of God, that there is no Possibility to reunite them again, and restore the old Friendship, as long as the Soul is not quite changed and transformed. That first Creation is so marred and defaced, that there is no mending of it till a second Creation come. The carnal Mind is not simply an *Enemy*, but *Enmity* itself; an *Enemy* may reconcile again, and accept Terms of Peace, but *Enmity* cannot reconcile to Amity, without the very Destruction of itself: The Opposition of the Heart is so perfect, that as soon may Enmity unite with Amity, and become one with it, as a carnal natural Mind can submit to God's holy Will. That which was at the Beginning voluntary, is become necessary, and turned into the Nature of an inbred Antipathy, that no Art can cure. The *Fall* was such a disjointing of the Soul from God, that no Skill but infinite Wisdom, no Strength but Almighty Power can set it right, and put it in the first Posture again. It is true, there are not many who will openly and expresly denounce War against Heaven; it is not so incident, that any Man should have explicite plain Thoughts of Hatred against God, there are some common Principles engraven by God in all Mens Minds, which serve as his Witnesses against Men, that God should be loved, served, adored and worshipped, that there is nothing so worthy of the Desires of the Soul. Now, this general Acknowledgment deludes the most part, for they take it for granted, that they do love God with their Heart, because their Consciences bear Witness that they ought to love him, as if it were all one to know our Duty, and to do it. Who is there but he entertains himself with with this good Opinion of himself, that his Heart is good and true to God: For, say you, whom should I love, if I love not God? I were not worthy to live if I loved

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not him. It is true indeed that you ſay, but if you did know your Hearts, you would find their Faces turned backward, and averted from God, and could no more pleaſe your ſelves in ſuch a Confeſſion of the Truth, than the Devil hath Reaſon to think himſelf a Believer, becauſe he is convinced, that Chriſt is the Son of God, and confeſſed it too; no more than the Son that promiſed to go to the Garden to work, and went not, had Ground to think himſelf an obedient Son, *Mat.* xxi. 30. Such a Confeſſion of Duty may be extorted from damned Spirits; and therefore you would not draw this Vail over the wretched Wickedneſs of your Natures, to the End that you may conceive well of your ſelves. It is ſo far from extenuating or excuſing, that the very Conviction of the great Obligation to love and obey God, is the greateſt Aggravation of the Enmity. It is this which makes it the pureſt Malice and perfecteſt Hatred, that knowing the Goodneſs of God, convinced of our bound Duty to love and ſerve him, yet in the very Light of ſuch a ſhining Truth, to turn our Hearts away from him, and exerciſe all Acts of Hoſtility againſt him. That you may know then, wherein the Enmity of your Hearts conſiſts, I ſhall inſtance it in three Branches or Evidences. There is an Enmity in the Underſtanding, that it cannot ſtoop to believing of the Truth; there is an Enmity in the Will, that it cannot ſubject to the Obedience of God's holy Commands; and this is extended alſo to a ſtubborn Rebellion againſt the Will of God, manifeſted in the Diſpenſations of his Providence: In a Word, the natural and carnal Mind is incapable of Faith, of Obedience, and of Submiſſion. There are many Truths revealed in the Scripture, that the natural Man cannot receive or know, for *they are Fooliſhneſs to him*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Some Spirits there are lifted up above others, either by Nature or Education, in which this Rebellion doth more evidently appear; Reaſon in them contends with Religion, and they will believe no more than they can give a Reaſon for. There is a Wiſdom in ſome Men, that deſpiſeth the Simplicity, or the In-evidence of the Goſpel, and accounts it Fooliſhneſs: The carnal Mind will needs ſtart out from implicite truſting of God, when once 'tis poſſeſſed with ſome Imagination of Wiſdom; therefore how many are the Inſurrections of Mens Spirits againſt God's abſolute Power over the Creatures, againſt the Myſteries of the holy Trinity and Incarnation, againſt the Reſurrection of our Bodies? In theſe, and ſuch like, the pretended Wiſdom of Men hath taken Liberty to act Enmity, and to diſpute againſt God. But truly, the Rebellion and Inſubjection againſt the Truth of God, is more generally practiſed, even by the Multitude of Men, though in an unfree hidden Way; how few do believe their own deſperate Wickedneſs, tho' God hath teſtified it of Man? Doth not every one apprehend ſome good to remain in his Nature, and ſome Power to good? What an Impoſſibility is it to perſuade you, that all Mankind are under the Sentence of eternal Condemnation, that Children, who have not done Good or Evil, are involved in it alſo? Your Hearts riſeth againſt ſuch Doctrines, as if they were bloody and cruel Inventions. To tell you, that *many are called, and few choſen*, that the moſt Part of them who profeſs the Truth, are walking in the way to Hell, and ſhall undoubtedly fall into it: You may hear ſuch Things, but you bleſs your ſelves from them, and cannot be perſuaded to admit them into your Minds; The Hearts

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of Men will be giving the very Lie to the God of Truth, when he ſpeaks theſe Things in his Word; God forbid that all that be true! If we ſhould expound the Law unto you, and ſhew you that the leaſt idle Word, the lighteſt Thought, the ſmalleſt inward Motion of the Heart deſerves eternal Miſery; that Anger, is Murder in God's Sight; that luſting, is Fornication; that Covetouſneſs and Love of the World, is Idolatry; theſe Things you cannot know or receive them; there are ſo many high Imaginations in your Minds that exalt themſelves againſt the Knowledge of God, ſo many Thoughts that are muſter'd and ſet in battle-array againſt the holy Truths of God, that truly no Weapons of humane Perſuaſion, or Inſtruction, can be able to caſt down your Miſapprehenſions and Imaginations, or Reaſonings of your Hearts, or able to ſcatter theſe Armies of rebellious Thoughts, and bring them in Captivity, 2 *Cor.* x. 4, 5. Mans darkned Mind is a ſtrong Hold, that all the repeated and continued Bealings of the Word, the multiplying *Precept upon Precept, and Line upon Line*, cannot ſtorm it, to make any true Light ſhine into it. It is a Dungeon, a Pit ſo ſhut up and incloſed, no Door nor Window in it; ſo that albeit the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhine upon it, and round about it, there is no Beam of that Light can enter in the Hearts of many Thouſands: The generality are drowned as yet in a Deluge of Ignorance, under the very Light of daily preaching. It is a Night of as thick Darkneſs within Men's Souls, as if there were no Light about us: Certainly this declares the Height of Enmity, the Strength of the Oppoſition; this Priſon of your Minds is a ſtrong Hold indeed, that is Proof of all Preaching or Inſtruction; and certainly they will hold out, till Almighty Power ſtorm them, and beat or batter open ſome Entry in your Souls, to receive this ſhining Light of the Goſpel.

Then, there is a Rebellion of the Will againſt God's holy Will revealed in his Law or Word: It cannot be ſubject to the Law of God. It neither is, nor can; for Enmity and Antipathy is ſunk into its Nature ſo, that it is the moſt deformed monſtrous Thing in the World: If the diſfigured Face of Man's Soul were viſible, O how ugly were it! How would you loath it? If there were a Creature that could do nothing but hate it ſelf, and ſought its own Deſtruction, that were a hateful enough Object; but Self-hatred and Enmity is nothing ſo deformed and abominable as for the Creatures Will to be ſet in oppoſition to the holy Will of him that made it. It needs not much Demonſtration this, if you had but a little more Conſideration: Look back upon the Tenor of your Ways, ſet them beſide the Will and Commands of God, and what find you? whether Agreement or Diſagreement? Take a View of the Current of your Inclinations and Affections, and compare that with the holy Will of God, and what find you? Friendſhip or Enmity. You cannot digeſt the Reproach of that, to be called Enemies to God; but, I pray you conſider if there be not as perfect Contrariety in your Deſires, Affections, Inclinations, and Actions to the Will of God, as if you did profeſs it; What would you do if you profeſſed your ſelves Enemies to God? Could you poſſibly vent your Enmity any other Way than this, in withdrawing from the Yoke of his Obedience, in revolting from that Allegiance you owe to him? You could wrong him no further than by ſetting your Hearts and Ways contrary to his Heart and Ways, in loving

loving what he hates, and hating what he loves, for his own bleſſed Being you could not impair it. Now, conſider if that be not acted as really as if you did profeſs it; Can you ſay, that *Curſing*, *Swearing*, *Lying*, *Railing*, *Anger*, *Strife*, *Envy*, *Revenge*, and ſuch like Works of Darkneſs, are the Things which his Soul loves? Are theſe ſuitable to his holy Will? And yet theſe are your inveterated Cuſtoms, to which your Natures are ſo inured and habituated, that you can no more forſake them, than hate your ſelves. Are Filthineſs, Drunkenneſs, Sabbath-breaking, Covetouſneſs, and Love of the World, are theſe his Delight? and yet theſe are your Delight. Again, Is it not his Will that ye ſhould *purge your ſelves from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, and perfect Holineſs?* Is not Righteouſneſs that which he loves, and Truth in the inward Parts? Doth not he look to a contrite Heart, and account that a ſavoury Sacrifice? Is it not his royal Statute and Commandment (of which not one Jot ſhall fail) that ye ſhould deny your ſelves, love your Enemies, forgive them that offend you, ſanctify his Name always in your Hearts, and eſpecially on the holy Sabbath? That ye ſhould watch unto Prayer, be ſober in the Uſe of the World, be much in watching for his ſecond coming again? Now, what Repugnance is in your Hearts and Ways to all theſe? Do not the Converſations of Men diſplay a Banner againſt the Goſpel, and proclaim as much in reality, as is ſaid in Words, in *Pſal.* ii. *Let us caſt his Cords behind us, and cut his Bands?* Theſe Things are unſavoury unto you, you ſmell nothing pleaſant in them; but only in the Puddle of the World, in running at Random, at your own Liberty, after your own Imaginations; that you account only Liberty. O! when ſhall your Hearts be ſubdued, and your Affections brought in Captivity to the Obedience of Chriſt: When ſhall you be delivered up to the Truth; and ſo made to *obey from the Heart that Form of Doctrine and ſound Words*, Rom. vi. 17. This is the ſtrongeſt Hold that Satan hath in Man's Heart, his Will and Affections; and this keeps out longeſt againſt Jeſus Chriſt; till he that is ſtronger come and bind the ſtrong Man, and caſt out the Enmity, and make all captive to his loving Obedience, and willing Subjection, 2 *Cor.* x. 4, 5.

Then, *thirdly*, The Enmity of the Soul of Man is acted in his Rebellion againſt the Will of God manifeſted in his Works, in his Unſubjection and unſubmiſſive Diſpoſition towards the good Pleaſure of the Lord, in carving out ſuch a Lot in the World. It is certain, that as the Will of God is the ſupreme Rule of Righteouſneſs, ſo it is the ſovereign Cauſe and Fountain of all Things; and therefore, how infinitely is the Creature bound to ſubject to him as a Law-giver, by pleaſant and willing Obedience to his righteous and reaſonable Commands; and to ſubmit to him as the abſolute Ruler, by quiet and humble Condeſcendance, to all the Diſpenſations of his Providence? Now, you know (if you know any Thing of your ſelves) how croſs and oppoſite theſe Hearts of yours are to his good Pleaſure; how they are ſet juſt contrary: And whence flows all Murmurings, Grudgings, Diſcontents, Griefs, Cares and Perplexities of Men, but from this Fountain, *The Rebellion of the Heart againſt God?* There is nothing in all the Creation mutinous and malecontent, but the *Heart of Man.* You ſee frequent Examples of it, in the Murmurations of the People.

People in the Wilderneſs. It is frequently ſtiled, *A tempting of the Lord*, Exod. xvii. 2. importing a high Provocation of his holy Majeſty; a ſpecial Incitement, as it were, and Motive to declare his abſolute Power and Righteouſneſs againſt ſuch; and therefore theſe are often conjoyned, *Pſal.* lxxviii. 17, 18. *They ſinned yet more, by provoking the moſt High: And they tempted God in their Heart*: And 'tis added *Verſe* 19. *Yea, they ſpeak againſt God.* Wherein you may obſerve, a Gradation of Aggravations of this Enmity. When Men have already deſerved infinite Puniſhment at his Hand, and may always look within, and find an Anſwer to all the Murumurings of their Hearts, as having ſinned ſo often againſt him; yet then, to riſe up againſt his good Pleaſure; and after we have ſo often ſinned, to repine at any Thing coming from him. And this, certainly, is a high Provocation of the moſt high God: It puts a kind of Neceſſity upon him, to inflict that which thou indeed deſerves; and then, this inward *Heart-burning* againſt God, it breaks out often in Words, againſt that moſt high and holy One, for *Ver.* 40, 41. and *Ver.* 56, 57. *Provocking*, which is the plain Expreſſion of Murmuring, in the Margine it is rendered, *rebelling againſt Him:* And ſo in *Verſe* 8. when a ſhort Account is given of them, when the Character or Anagram of ſuch a People is expreſſed, 'tis ſet down thus, *A ſtubborn and rebellious Generation.* Therefore *Paul*, conſidering this woful and wretched Poſture of the Soul, ſet in Oppoſition to the always bleſſed Will of God, and the Madneſs and Folly of it, he exhorts us, *neither murmur ye, as ſome of them murmured, and were deſtroyed of the Deſtroyer; for theſe Things happened for Enſamples*, &c. 1 *Cor.* x. 10, 11. Truly, there is nothing either more deformed and vile in itſelf, or more diſquieting and tormenting to the Soul, or more dangerous in the Conſequences of it, than ſuch a Poſture of Spirit, *a diſcontented Humour againſt God's Providence.* Whether it be in with-holding that good Thing from us which we deſire, or ſending that which croſſeth our Humour; whether Sickneſs, or Want, or Reproach, or Diſreſpect; whatſoever it be that the Heart is naturally carried to purſue or eſchew. What more abominable and ugly Viſage, than the Countenance of an angry and furious Perſon? But when this is againſt God, it adds infinitely to the Deformity and Vileneſs of it. *I do well to be angry* is the Motto of a diſcontented Soul. It erects an imaginary Sovereignty againſt true Sovereignty: It ſets up an *Antiprovidence*; it eſtabliſheth another Divine Power and Wiſdom, and brings the Majeſty, Highneſs and Holineſs of God down to be tread upon by the Creature. And then it is its own Tormenter, a Sin that needs no Puniſhment, but itſelf: The Inſurrection and Mutiny of the Heart againſt God's Will ſets all the Powers of the Soul out of Courſe, vexes, pains and diſquiets all. There is no Peace and Tranquility, but in the Complacency of the Heart with God's Heart; as *Ephraim was like a Bullock unaccuſtomed with the Yoke*, Jer. xxxi. 18. the more he fretted and ſpurned at his Yoke, the more it galled him, and grieved him, till he was inſtructed, and then he was eaſed. This fills the Soul with hideous tormenting Thoughts and Cares: This feeds upon its own Marrow, and conſumes it (as ſome have made the Emblem of Envy) which is a particular Kind of this Enmity: As if you would imagine a Creature, that did waſte

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and consume all its Moisture and Marrow, and feed upon the Destruction of itself. Now, this is but the Prelude of what follows; this Self-punishment is a Messenger to tell what is coming, that the most high God is engaged in his Power against such a Person, and shall vent his Displeasure to their eternal Displeasure; that is the Fruit of this Enmity.

SERMON XXI.

Ver. 7, 8. *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God: And cannot be subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they who are in Flesh, cannot please God,*

IT is not the least of Man's Evils, that he knows not how Evil he is; therefore the Searcher of the Heart of Man, gives the most perfect Account of it, *Jer.* xvii. 12. *The Heart is deceitful above all Things*, as well as *desperately wicked*. Two Things superlative and excessive in it, bordering upon an Infiniteness, such as Sin is capable of, Wickedness and Deceitfulness! And indeed, that which makes the wicked Heart desperately and hopelessly so, is the Deceitfulness of it. There are many specious Coverings gotten to palliate this Wickedness and Enmity, and so many invisible and spiritual Wickednesses in the Heart, that it is no Wonder, that they lurk and dwell without Observation. Sin is either covered with some deceivable Pretext of another Thing, or altogether escapes the dim Eyes of Men, because of its subtile and spiritual Nature. Both are in this Business: The Enmity of Man's Heart against God is so subtile a Thing in many, and it is shrouded over with some other Pretences in all, that few get the lively Discovery and Sense of it. It is true, it is very gross and palpable in the most Part of Men, visible, I mean, upon them, tho' not to themselves. Any, whose Eyes are opened, may behold the black Visage of Rebellion in the most Part of the Actings and Courses of Men, as the Apostle, *Gal.* vi. speaks, *The Works of the Flesh are manifest*. Truly this *Enmity against God* is too too manifest in most Part, the Weapons of your Warfare against God being so carnal and visible, your Opposition to his holy Will and Ways being so palpable. There is an *Enmity* acted by many in the Tenor of their Conversation, without God in the World, and against God; as appears in all your inveterate and godless Customs of Lying, Swearing, Cursing, Drunkenness, Railing, Sabbath-breaking, Neglect of Prayer, and such like; which carry in their Fore brow this Inscription, *Against the known God*, opposite to that of the *Athenains* Altar: The God whom you pretend to know and

worship, his Name is every Day blaſphemed, his Word ſlighted, his Will diſobeyed, as if you had proclaimed War againſt him. But there is in ſome (and I fear a great many) not only an *acted*, but an *affected Enmity* too. *Enmity* riſing up to the Maturity and Ripeneſs of *Malignity* and Hatred of the Image of God, in all his Children. Some are not willing to go to Heaven, yet they do not diſturb others in their Journey: they can let others be religious about them, and rawly deſire to be like them: But others there are, who will neither enter into Heaven themſelves, nor let others enter, as Chriſt ſpeaks of the *Phariſees*, Mat. xxiii. 13. They hate the Light of another's Converſation, becauſe their own Deeds are evil, and are reproved and condemned by it. 'Tis ſaid, *Rev.* xi. 10. *The Witneſſes tormented them that dwelt on the Earth.* It is ſtrange, what a Torment it is to the World, that the godly are in it! Piety is an Eye-ſore to many: If they could extirpate all that bears that Image, they would think it ſweet as Bread, *Pſal.* xiv. This is a more open and declared Enmity againſt the God of Heaven; and yet I know it lurks under the Mask of ſome other Thing. You pretend to hate Hypocriſy only; alas! what a Scorn is it for Profanity to hate Hypocriſy? Sure it is not becauſe it is a Sin, but for the very Shadow of Piety it carries. You hate the Thing it ſelf ſo perfectly, that you cannot indure the very Picture of it. Do not deceive your ſelves, the true Quarrel is, becauſe they run not to the ſame Exceſs of Riot with you: If they will lie, cozen, defraud, ſwear, and blaſpheme as other Men, you could endure to make them Companions, as you do others; and the Principle of that is, the *Enmity* that was placed in the Beginning: That mortal irreconcilable Feud, betwixt the two Families, are two Seeds of *Chriſt* and *Satan*.

But (as I told you) this Enmity acts in a more ſubtile and inviſible Way in ſome, and it is painted over with ſome fair Colours, to hide the Deformity of it: Not only the groſſer Corruptions of Men carry this Stamp, but take even the moſt refined Piece or Part in Man; take his *Mind*, take the *Excellency of his Mind*, even the *Wiſdom* of it; yet that hath *Enmity* incorporated into it, and mixed with it throughout all; for *the Wiſdom of the Fleſh is Enmity with God*, as it may be read, φρονημα, the very *Prudence* and *Reaſon* of a natural Man, which carries him to a Diſtance from, and Oppoſition with, the common Defilements in the Courſes of Men; yet that hath in its Boſom a more exquiſite and refined *Enmity* againſt God: And ſo the more ſpiritual and purified it be from groſſer Corruptions, it is the more active and powerful againſt God, becauſe it is, as it were, *the very Spirit and Quinteſſence of Enmity*. You ſee it, 1 *Cor.* i. how *the Wiſdom of God is Fooliſhneſs to the Wiſdom of the World*; and then again, *that the Wiſdom of the World is the greateſt Folly to the only wiſe God*. Men, that have many natural Advantages beyond others, are at this great Diſadvantage, they are more ready to deſpiſe Godlineſs, as too baſe and ſimple a Thing, to adorn their Natures: As Chriſt ſaid of rich Men, it may be ſaid of wiſe Men, of learned Men, of civil and blameleſs Perſons, who have a ſmooth Carriage before the World, *how hard is it for ſuch to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? Hard indeed!* for they muſt be ſtript naked of that, ere they can enter through this narrow Gate; I mean, the

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Opinion and Conceit, of any Worth or Excellency, and ſo diminiſhed in their own Eyes, that they may go through this Needle's Eye without cruſhing.

The Stream of *Enmity* runs under Ground often, and ſo hides it ſelf under ſome other Notion, till at length it burſt forth openly. I find it commonly runs in the ſecret Channel of Amity or Friendſhip to ſome other Thing oppoſite to God: So *James* iv. 4. *The Amity of the World is Enmity with God*; and 1 Joh. ii. 15. *He that loveth the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* There are two dark and under-ground Conduits, to convey this Enmity againſt God, Amity to the World, and Amity to our ſelves, *Self-love*, and *Creature-love*. We cannot denounce War openly againſt Heaven, but this is the next Courſe, to join to, or aſſociate with, any Party that is contrary to God; and thus, under the Covert of Friendſhip to our ſelves, and Love to the World, we war againſt God, and deſtroy our own Souls. I ſay, *Firſt*, Amity to the World carries Enmity to God in the Boſom of it: And if you believe not this, hear the Apoſtle's ſharp and pungent Queſtion, *You Adulterers and Adultereſſes, know you not that the Amity of the World is Enmity with God?* He doth not ſpeak only to Perſons guilty of that Crime, but to all natural Men, who are guilty of Adultery or Whoredom of a more ſpiritual Nature, but as abominable and more dangerous. There is a Bond and ſpecial Tye betwixt all Men and God their Maker, which obligeth to conſecrate and devout themſelves, their Affections and Endeavours to his Honour, eſpecially when the Covenant of the Goſpel is ſuperadded unto that, in which Jeſus Chriſt our Lord reveals himſelf, as having only Right to us and our Affections; as willing to beſtow himſelf upon us; and notwithſtanding of all the Diſtance between him and wretched Sinners, yet filling it up with his infinite Love, and wonderful Condeſcendency, dimitting himſelf to the Form of a Servant, out of Love, that ſo he might take us up to be his chaſt Spouſe, and adorn us with his Beauty. This he challengeth of us, whoever hear and profeſs the Goſpel. This is your Profeſſion (if ye underſtood it) *That Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be your Well-beloved, and ye his*; that you ſhall ſeparate your ſelf to him, and admit no Stranger in his Place; that the choiſe and Marrow of your Joy, Love and Delight, ſhall be beſtowed on him. Now, this Bond and Tye of a profeſſed Relation to that glorious Husband, is foully broken by the moſt Part, by eſpouſing their Affections to this baſe World. Your Hearts are turned off him unto Strangers, that is, preſent periſhing Things: Whereas the Intendment of the Goſpel is, *To preſent you to Chriſt as pure Virgins*, 2 Cor. xi. 2. Truly your Hearts are gone a-whoring after other Things; the Love of the World hath withdrawn you, or kept you in Chains; theſe preſent Things are as Snares, Nets and Bands; *as an Harlot's Hands and Heart*, Eccl. vii. 26. they are powerful Inchantments over you, which bewitch you to a baſe Love, from an honourable and glorious Love. O that you would conſider it, my Beloved, what Oppoſition there is betwixt the Love of the World, and the Love of the Father; betwixt Amity to that which hath nothing in it, but ſome preſent Bait to your deceitful Luſts, and Amity to God, your only lawful Husband. Affection is a transforming and conforming Thing, *Si terram amas terra es*; the

Love of God would purify thy Heart, and lift it up to more Similitude to him whom thou loves; but the Love of the World assimilates it unto the World, makes it such a base and ignoble Piece, as the Earth is. Do you think Marriage-affection can be parted? *My Well-beloved is mine*; therefore the Church is the *Turtle*, the *Dove* to Christ, of wonderful Chastity: It never joins but to one, and after the Death of its Marrow, it sighs and mourns ever after, and sits solitarily. You must retire, my Beloved, and disingage from the Love of other Things, or you cannot love Christ; and if you love not Christ, you cannot have Peace with the Father: And if you have not that Peace, you cannot have Life. This is the Chain of Life; the first Link begins at the Divorcement of all Manner of Loves and beloved Idols: Once the Soul must be loosed in Desire and Delight, and that Link must be fastned upon the most lovely and desirable Object, *Christ, the Desire of the Nations:* And this draws alongs another Link of Peace and Life with it. Do not mistake it, Religion would not hinder or prejudge your lawful Business in this World: O, it were the most compendious Way to advance it, with more Ease to your Souls! But certainly it will teach you to exchange the Love of these Things for a better and more heart-contenting Love.

Then, *Amity to our selves is Enmity to God*; and truly this is the last strong Hold that holds out longest against God, when others may be beaten down, or surrendered. Possibly a Man may attain to this, to despise these lower Things, as below his natural Dignity and the Excellency of his Spirit; some may renounce much of that Friendship with worldly and temporal Things, as being sordid and base: But the *Enmity* gets into this strong and invisible Tower of Darkness, *Self-love* and *Pride*; and therefore the Apostle *John* makes this the last and chiefest, *the Pride of Life*, 1 Joh. ii. 16. When the Lusts of the Eyes and Flesh are in some Measure abated, this is but growing; and what decreaseth of these, seems to accresce unto this: As if Self-love and Pride did feed and nourish it self upon the Ashes or Consumption of other Vices. Yea, it draws Sap from *Graces and Virtues*, and grows thereby, till at length it kill that which nourished it: And indeed the Apostle *James* seems to proceed to this, *Ver.* 5, 6. when he minds us that *God resisteth the proud, and giveth Grace to the humble. Doth the Scripture say this in vain?* saith he. Is not *Self-amity*, as well *Enmity* as the *Amity of the World?* and therefore God opposes himself unto it, as the very grand Enmity. *Self* is the great *Lord*, the *Arch-rebel*, the Head of all the Opposition, that in which they do all center; and when all the inferior Soldiers are Captives, or killed, this is last in the Field, it lives first in opposition, and dies last, *primum vivens, & ultimum moriens.* When a Man is separated from many Things, yet he may be but more conjoyned to *himself*, and so the further disjoyned from God. Of all the vile Rags of the old Man, this is neareſt the Skin, and last put off: Of all the Members, *Self* is the *Heart*, first alive, and last alive: When *Enmity* is constrained to render up the outward Members of the Body, to yield them to a more smooth and fair Carriage, to a civil Behaviour; when the Mind it self is forced to yield unto some Light of Truth, and Knowledge of the Gospel; yet the *Enmity* retires into the *Heart*, and

and fortifies it the ſtronger, by Self-love, and Self-eſtimation; as in Winter, the encompaſſing Cold makes the Heat to combine it ſelf together in the Bowels of the Earth, and by this Means the Springs are hotter than in Summer; ſo the ſurrounding Light of the Goſpel, or Education, or natural Honeſty, drives the Heat and Strength of Enmity inward, where it fortifies it ſelf more: This is that accurſed *Antiperiſtaſis*, that is made by the Concurrence of ſome Advantages of Knowledge and Civility, and ſuch like. The Blood of *Enmity* againſt God gets in about the Heart when it is chaſed for Fear out of the outward Man: Therefore, the very firſt and fundamental Principle of Chriſtianity, is, *Let a Man deny himſelf, and ſo he ſhall be my Diſciple*; he muſt become a Fool in his own Eyes, though he be wiſe, that he may be wiſe, 1 *Cor.* iii. 18. he muſt become as ungodly, though godly, that he may be juſtified by Faith, *Rom.* iv. 5. he muſt forſake himſelf, that he may indeed find himſelf, or get a better ſelf in another; he muſt *not eat much Honey, that is not good*, it would ſwell him tho' it be pleaſant: *He muſt not ſearch his own Glory*, or reflect much upon it, if he would be a Follower and Friend of Chriſt. Look, how much ſoever you engage to your ſelves Eſteem, or deſire to be eſteemed of others, to reflect with Complacency on your ſelves, to mind your own Satisfaction and Eſtimation in what you do, ſo much you diſingage from Jeſus Chriſt, for theſe are contrary Points: 'Tis a direct Motion towards Chriſt, 'tis an inverſe and backward Motion towards our ſelves; and ſo much as we move that Way, we promove not, but loſe of our way, and are further from the true End. *Ezekiel*'s living Creatures, may be an Emblem of a Chriſtian's Motion, *he returns not as he goes*, he makes a ſtraight Line to God, whitherſoever he turn him; but Nature makes all crooked Lines, they ſeem to go forth in Obedience to God, but they have a Secret unſeen Reflection into its own Boſom. And this is the greateſt Act of *Enmity, to idolize God, and deifie our ſelves:* We make him a Cypher, and ſacrifice to our ſelves: His peculiar incommunicable Property, of *Alpha* and *Omega*, that we do ſacrilegiouſly attribute to our ſelves, the Beginning of our Notions, and End of them too. This is the crooked Line, that Nature cannot poſſibly move out of, till a higher Spirit come, *and reſtore her that halted, and make plain her Paths.*

That which is added, as a Reaſon, explains this *Enmity* more clearly; *Becauſe it cannot be ſubject*, &c. Truly theſe two forementioned *Amities of the World and of our ſelves*, do withdraw Men wholly from the orderly Subjection, that they owe to the Law of God. Order is the Beauty of every Thing, of Nature, of Art, of the whole Univerſe, and of the ſeveral Parts, Kingdoms and Republicks of it. This indeed is the very Beauty of the World, all Things ſubordinate to him that made them; only *miſerable Man* hath broken this Order, and married this Beauty, *and he cannot be ſubject* ὑποτάσσεται, cannot come again into that orderly Station and Subordination he was once into. This is the only Gap or Breach of the Creation. And it is ſome other Engagements that draw him thus far out of Courſe; *the baſe Love of the World and the inordinate Love of himſelf*, O theſe make his Neck ſtiff, that cannot bow to the Yoke of Obedience: Theſe have oppoſite and contrary Commands, and *no Man can ſerve two Maſters*;

Masters. When the Commands of the great Lord, *Self*, comes in opposition with the Commands of *God*, then he cannot be subject to the Law of God. For a Time, in some Things, he may resemble a Subjection, when the Will of *Self*, and the Will of *God* commands in one Point, as sometimes they do by Accident; but that is neither frequent nor constant.

Not only, he is *not subject*, but there is worse in it, *he cannot be subject to the Law of God*. This is certainly to throw down the natural Pride of Man, that always apprehends some remanent Ability in himself. You think still to make your selves better, and when convinced or challenged for Sins, to make amends, and reform your Lives. You use to promise these Things as lightly and easily, as if they were wholly in your Power, and as if you did only delay them for Advantage; and truly it seems, this Principle of *Self-sufficiency* is engraven on Mens Hearts, when they procrastinate and delay Repentance, and earnest minding of Religion to some other fitter Season, as if it were in their Liberty, to apply to it when they please: And when you are urged and persuaded to some Reformation, you take in Hand, even as that People, *Jer.* xlii. 6, 20. *Who said, all that the Lord hath said, we will do:* You can strike Hands, and engage to serve the Lord, as easily, as that People in *Joshua* xxiv. 18, 19. But we may say, Oh that there were such a Heart in you! But alas, such a Heart is not in you! *You cannot serve the Lord, for he is holy and jealous*, and ye are not only weak, but wicked. I beseech you then, believe this one Testimony that God hath given of Man, even the choicest Thing in Man, the very *Wisdom* of a natural Man, *It is not subject to God's Law*, and it cannot be better, *neither can it be subject*. Resolution, Industry, Vows and Covenants will not effect this, till the most High break and bow the Heart. And not only is this *Enmity* against the old Law of Commandments an Antipathy at them, as crossing our Lusts, but even against the new and living Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ.

Here is your Misery, you can neither be subject to the Law as commanding to obey it, or threatning for Disobedience to it, nor to the Gospel as promising to believe and receive it. The Law commands, but your Law countermands within; the Law threatens and sentences you with Condemnation, but you have some self-pleasing Delusion and Dream in your Heads, and bless your selves in your own Hearts, even though ye walk in the Imagination of your Hearts, contrary to the Law, *Deut.* xxix. It is strange that you do not fore-apprehend and fear Hell: But 'tis this Delusion possesses the Heart, *you shall not die:* It was the first Act of *Enmity*, not only the Transgression of the Command, but Unbelief of the Truth of the Curse: And that which first encouraged Man to Sin, encourages you all to ly into it, and continue in it, *a Fancy of escaping Wrath*. This Noise fills the Heart: Satan whispers it in the Ear, *Go on, you shall not die*. Thus it appears, that the natural Mind cannot be subject to the Law of God, no Persuasion, no Instruction, can inforce this Belief of your damnable Condition upon you.

But then, when the *Enmity* is beaten out of this Fort, and a Soul is really convinced of its desperate and lost Estate, when the Heart is brought down to Subjection, to take with that dreadful Sentence;

tence; yet there is another Tower of *Enmity* in the Heart, that can keep out againſt the Weapons of the Goſpel, ſuch as *Paul* mentions, *Rom.* x. 3. *Being ignorant of the Righteouſneſs of God, they went about to eſtabliſh their own, and could not ſubmit to the Righteouſneſs of God.* There is a natural Pride and Stiffneſs of Heart, that we cannot endure but to have ſomething in our ſelves, to reſt on, and take Pleaſure into: And when a Soul ſees nothing, it rather vexes and torments itſelf, as grieving becauſe it hath no Ornament or Covering of its own, nor rejoiceth and delighteth in that Righteouſneſs of God revealed in Chriſt. O the Difficulty to bow down ſo low, as to put on another's Righteouſneſs over our Nakedneſs! And ſhould it be called *Submiſſion?* Is it not rather the elevating, and exalting of a Soul? Yet in reſpect of our natural Poſture of Spirit, it is a Matter of great Difficulty, to make a ſelf-condemned Sinner *ſubmit* to this, to be ſaved freely, without Money or Price, by another's Ranſom. What empty, vain and frivolous Expiations and Satisfactions will Souls invent, rather than truſt all to this? How long will poor Souls wander abroad, from Hill to Mountain, ſeeking ſome inherent Qualification, to commend them, and leave this Garden and Paradiſe of Delights, which is opened up in Chriſt? Souls look every where for Help, till all Hands fail; and then *Neceſſity* conſtrains them to come hither; but indeed, *Neceſſity* brought in *Charity*, and *Amity* keeps in, when once he knows what Entertainment is in Chriſt. As for you, who as yet have not ſtooped to the Sentence of Wrath, how will you ſubmit to the Righteouſneſs of God? But I wonder how you imagine this to be ſo eaſy a Thing, *To believe?* You ſay you did always believe in Chriſt, and that your Hearts are ſtill on him, and that you do it Night and Day. Now, there needs no other Argument, to perſuade that you do not at all believe in the Goſpel, who have apprehended no more Difficulty in it, no more Contrariety to your rebellious Natures in it: Let this one Word go home with you, and convince you of your Unbelief, *The natural Mind is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can it be.* How then do you come ſo eaſily by it? Certainly it muſt be feigned and counterfeit.

SERMON XXII.

Verſe 8. *So then they that are in the Fleſh, cannot pleaſe God.*

IT is a kind of Happineſs to Men, to pleaſe them upon whom they depend, and upon whoſe Favour their Well-being hangs. It is the Servants Happineſs to pleaſe his Maſter, the Courtiers to pleaſe his Prince; and ſo generally, whoſoever they

they that are joined in mutual Relations, and depend one upon another; that which makes all pleasant, is this, *To please one another*. Now, certainly all the Dependencies of Creatures one upon another, are but Shadows unto the absolute Dependance of Creatures upon the Creator, *for in him we live, and move, and have our Being*: The Dependance of the Ray upon the Sun, of the Stream upon the Fountain, is one of the greatest in Nature; but all Creatures have a more necessary Connexion with this *Fountain-being*, both in their Being and Well-being: They are nothing but a Flux and Emanation of his Power and Pleasure, and, as the *Psalmist* expresseth it, *He hides his Face, and they are troubled, he takes away their Breath, and they die, and return to their Dust: He sends forth his Spirit, and they are created, and he renews the Face of the Earth*, Psal. cxliv. 29, 30. You may extend this to the Being and Well-being, the Happiness and Misery of Creatures; our Souls which animate our Bodies are but his Breath which he breathed into the Dust, and can retract it when he pleaseth: The Life of our Souls, the Peace, and Tranquillity, and Satisfaction is another Breathing of his Spirit, and another Look of his Countenance, and as he pleases to withdraw it, or interpose between his Face and us, so we live or die, are blessed or miserable. Our Being or Well-being hath a more indispensible Dependance on him, than the Image in the Glass hath upon the living Face.

If it be so then, certainly of all Things in the World, it concerns us nearest *how to please him*, and to be at Peace with him. If we be in good Terms with him, *in whose Hand our Breath is, and whose are all our Ways*, Dan. v. 23. upon whose Countenance our Misery or Felicity hangs; then certainly, we are happy: If we please him, it matters not whom we displease; for he alone hath absolute, uncontroled and universal Power over us, as our Saviour speaks, *over both Soul and Body*. We may expect that his good Pleasure towards us will not be satisfied, but in communicating his Fulness and manifesting his Favour to us, especially since the Goodness of God is so exundant, as to overflow even to the wicked World, and vent itself as out of Superabundance, in a River of Goodness throughout the whole Earth; how much more will it run abundantly towards them whom he is well-pleased with: And therefore the *Psalmist* cries out, as being already full in the very Hope and Expectation of it, that he would burst, if he had the Vent of Admiration and Praise. *O how great is his Goodness, and how excellent his loving Kindness laid up for them that fear him!* Psal. xxxi. 19. and xxxvi. 7. But on the other Hand, how incomparable is the Misery of them, who cannot please God; even though they did both please themselves and all others for the present: To be at odds with him, in whom alone they can subsist, and without whose Favour is nothing but Wretchedness and Misery, O! that must be the worst and most cursed Estate imaginable: To be in such a State, as do what they can, they cannot please him, whom alone to please is of only Concernment, what can be invented to that? Now, if you ask who they are that are such? The Words speak it plainly, in way of Inference from the former Doctrine, *Therefore they that are in the Flesh, cannot please God*. Not, *they in whom there is Flesh*; for there is Remnants of that in the most spiritual Man in this Life: We cannot attain

attain here to angelick Purity, though it should be the Aim and Endeavour of every Christian. But *they that are in the Flesh*, or *after the Flesh*, imports the Predomination of that, and an universal Thraldom of Nature unto it, which indeed is the State of all Men that are but once born, till a second Birth come, by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

The Ground of this may be taken from the foregoing Discourse, and it is chiefly twofold; one is, *Because they are not in Jesus Christ, in whom his Soul is well pleased*; another is, *Because they cannot suit and frame their Carriage to his Pleasure*. Since all Mankind hath fallen under the Displeasure of the most high God, by sinning against him, in preferring the Pleasure of the Flesh, and the Pleasure of Satan, to the Pleasure of God, there can be no Atonement found to pacify him, no Sacrifice to appease him, no Ransom to satisfy his Justice, but that one perfect Offering for Sin, *Jesus Christ*, the Propitiation for the Sins of the elect World. This the Father accepts, in the Name of Sinners; and in Testimony of his Acceptance, he did two several Times, by a Voice from Heaven, declare, first to a Multitude, *Matth.* iii. 17. and then to the beloved Disciples, *Matth.* xvii. 5. and both Times, with great Majesty and Solemnity (as did become him) *That this is his well-beloved Son, in whom his Soul is well pleased*. It pleased God, to make the Stream of his Love to take another Channel after Man's Sin, and not to run immediately towards wretched Man; but he turned the Current of his Love another Way, to his own Son, whom he chooseth for that End, to reconcile Man, and bring him unto Favour; and his Love going about, by that Compass, comes in the Issue towards poor Sinners with the greater Force. He hath appointed Christ *the Meeting-place* with Sinners, *the Days-man to lay his Hands on both*; and therefore he is *God* to lay his Hand on *God*, and *Man* to lay his Hand on *Man*, and bring both into a peaceable and amicable Conjunction. Now then, *whoever are not in Jesus Christ*, as is spoken, *Ver.* 1. certainly *they cannot please God*, do what they can; because God hath made Christ the Center, in which he would have the good Pleasure of Sinners meeting with his good Pleasure; and therefore, *without Faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. xi. 6. not so much for the Excellency of the Act itself, as for the well-pleasing Object of it, *Christ*. The Love of the Father is terminate in him, his Justice is satisfied in him, his Love is well pleased with the Excellency of his Person; he finds in him an Object of Delight, which is no where else; and his Justice is well pleased with the Sufficiency and Worthiness of his Ransom; and without this Compass, there is neither Satisfaction to the one, nor to the other: So then, whatsoever you are, how high soever your Degree in the World, how sweet soever your Disposition, let your Natures be never so good, your Carriage never so smooth; yet certainly there is nothing in all this, that can please God, either by an Object of Love, or a Price for Justice. You are under that eternal Displeasure, which will fall on and crush you to Pieces; Mountains will not be so heavy, as it will appear in that great Day of his Wrath, *Rev.* vi. I say, you cannot come from under that imminent Weight of eternal Wrath, unless you be found in *Jesus Christ*, that blessed Place of Immunity and Refuge, if you have not forsaken your selves, and your own Natures, and denied your own Righteous-

neſs as Dung, to be found in him, cloth-ed with his Righteouſneſs and Satisfaction. If the Delight and Pleaſure of your Soul do not co-incide and fall in at one Place with the Delight and good Pleaſure of the Father, that is, upon his well-beloved Son, certainly, the Pleaſure and Good-will of God hath not as yet fallen upon you, and met with you: Therefore, if you would pleaſe God, be pleaſed with Chriſt; and you cannot do him a greater Pleaſure, *than believe in him*, Joh. v. 23. that is, abſolutely reſign your ſelves unto him, for Salvation and Sanctification.

The other Ground is, *Such as are in the Fleſh cannot frame their Spirits, Affections and Ways, to God's good Pleaſure*; for their very Wiſdom, the very Excellency that is in them, is *Enmity to God*, and cannot ſubject to his Law; and therefore *they cannot pleaſe him*. I am ſure, you may eaſily reflect upon your ſelves, and find, not with much Search, but upon all theſe, as the Propher *Jer.* ii. 34. ſpeaks, that it is not the Study and Buſineſs you have undertaken, *to pleaſe God*, but the Bent and Main of your Aims and Endeavours is to pleaſe your ſelves, or to pleaſe Men. This makes many Men's Pains, even in Religion, diſpleaſing to God; becauſe they do not indeed mind his Pleaſure, but their own or others Satisfaction: What they do, is but to conform to the Cuſtom of the Time, or Commandments of Men, or their own Humour; and all this muſt needs be abominable to God. Truly, *that which is in great Account among Men, is Abomination to God*, as our Saviour ſpeaks of the very Righteouſneſs and profeſſed Piety of the Phariſees, *Luke* xiv. 25. the more you pleaſe your ſelves and the World, the further your are from pleaſing God. The very Beginning of pleaſing God, is, when a Soul falls in Diſpleaſure at itſelf, and Abhorency of his own Lothſomneſs; therefore it is ſaid, *The humble and contrite Spirit I will look unto, and dwell with him, and ſuch Sacrifices do pleaſe God*, Iſa. lxvi. 2. Pſal. li. 17. For the truth is, God never begins to be pleaſant and lovely to a Soul, till it begins to fall out of Love with itſelf, and grow lothſome in its own Eyes. Therefore you may conclude this of your ſelves, *That with many of you God is not well pleaſed, although you be all baptized unto Chriſt, and do all eat of that ſame ſpiritual Meat, and drink of that ſame ſpiritual Drink*; though you have all Church-privileges, yet *with many of you God is not well pleaſed*, as 1 *Cor.* x. 2, 3, 4, 5. not only becauſe theſe Works of the Fleſh that are directly oppoſite to his known Will, ſuch as Fornication, Murmuring, Grudging at God's Diſpenſation, Curſing and Swearing, Lying, Drunkenneſs, Anger, Malice, Strife, Variance, and ſuch like, abound as much among you as that old People; but even theſe of you, that may be free from groſs Oppoſition to his holy Will, your Nature hath the Seed of all that Enmity, and you act Enmity in a more covered Way; you are ſo well pleaſed with your ſelves, your chief Study is to pleaſe Men: You have not given your ſelves to this Study, to conform your ſelves to the Pleaſure of God; therefore know your dreadful Condition, *you cannot pleaſe God*, without whoſe Favour and Pleaſure you cannot, but be eternally diſpleaſed and tormented in your ſelves. Certainly, though now you pleaſe your ſelves, yet the Day ſhall come, that you ſhall be contrary to your ſelves, and all to you, as it is ſpoken as a Puniſhment of the *Jews*, 1 Theſ. ii. 15. and there are ſome Earneſt of it in this Life;

Life; many wicked Persons are set contrary to themselves, and all to them; they are like *Esau*, their Hand against all, and all Mens Hands against them; yea, their own Consciences continually vexing them: This is a Fruit of that fundamental Discord and Enmity between Men and God; and if you find it not now, you shall find it hereafter.

But as for you that are in Jesus Christ, who, being displeased with your selves, have fled unto the Well-beloved, in whom the Father is well pleased, to escape God's Displeasure; I say unto such, your Persons God is well pleased with in Christ, and this shall make Way and Place for Acceptance to your weak and imperfect Performances; this is the Ground of your Peace and Acceptance; and you would take it so, and it shall yield you much Peace, when you cannot be pleased with your selves. But I would charge that upon you, that as you by believing are well pleased with Christ, so you would henceforth study, *to walk worthy of your Lord into all Well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good Work, and increasing in the Knowledge of God*, Col. i. 10. This is that, to which you are called, to such a Work as may please him, to conform your selves even to his Pleasure and Will: If you love him, you cannot but fashion your selves so as he may be pleased. O how exact and observant is Love of that which may ingratiate itself in the Beloved's Favour! It is the most studious Thing to please, and most afraid of displeasing. *Enoch* had a large and honourable Testimony, as ever was given to Man, *that he pleased God*, Heb. xi. 5. I beseech you be ambitious of this after a holy Manner; labour to know his Will, and that for this End, that you may approve it, and prove it, that you may do that good and acceptable Will of God: Let his Pleasure be your Rule, your Law, to which all within you may conform itself. Though you cannot attain an exact Correspondence with his Pleasure, but in many Things you will offend; yet certainly this will be the resolved Study of your Hearts *how to please him*; and in as far as you cannot please him, you will be displeased with your selves: But then, I would advise you, in as far as you are displeased with your selves, for not pleasing God, be as much well pleased with Christ, the pleasing Sacrifice and Atonement; and this shall please God as much as your Obedience could do, or your Disobedience can displease him. To him be Praise and Glory.

SERMON XXIII.

Verſe 9. But ye are not in the Fleſh, but in the Spirit, if ſo be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.

APplication is the very Life of the Word, at leaſt it is a neceſſary Condition, for the living Operation of it: The Application of the Word to the Hearts of Hearers by Preaching, and the Application of your Hearts again to the Word by Meditation, theſe two meeting together, and ſtriking one upon another, will yield Fire. *Paul* ſpeaks of *a right dividing of the Word of Truth*, 2 Tim. ii. 15. not that ordinary Way of cutting it all in Parcels, and diſmembring it, by manifold Diviſions, which I judge makes it loſe much of its Vertue, which conſiſts in Union, tho' ſome have Pleaſure in it, and think it profitable; yet I do not ſee that this was the apoſtolick Way, that either they preached it themſelves, or recommended it to others; but rather he means, the real Diſtribution of the Food of Souls unto their various Conditions, as it is the Duty of a Steward to be both faithful and wiſe in that, to give every one their own Portion: And as it is the Paſtor's Duty, thus to diſtribute the Word of God unto you, ſo it is your Part to apply it home to your ſelves, without which Application, the former Diviſion of the Word aright, will not feed your Souls; If every Man act not the Paſtor to his own Heart, it cannot profit. Now indeed, the right Application of the Word to Souls is the difficulteſt Part of Preaching, and it is the hardeſt Point of Hearing; in which there needs both much Affection and much Direction, the one to be ſerious and earneſt in it, the other to be wiſe and prudent in it: Without ſuitable Affection, it will not paſs into the Subſtance of the Soul to feed it, no more than the Stomach can digeſt Meat, that wants convenient Heat; and without Diſcretion and Wiſdom, to chooſe our own Portion, it will not yield convenient Food, but increaſe Humours and Superfluities, or diſtemper our Spirits. That which I look at in theſe Words, is, the Diſcretion and Prudence of this wiſe Steward in God's Houſe, after he hath repreſented the wretched and woful Eſtate of *them that are in the Fleſh*, how their Natures cannot but act Enmity againſt God, how their End is Death and Deſtruction, he ſubjoins in due Seaſon a ſuitable Encouragement to Believers, *You are not in the Fleſh*, &c. Becauſe there is no Man ſo ſenſible of that Corruption that dwells within, as he that is in part renewed; as Pain to a healthful Body is moſt ſenſible, and as the Abundance of Light

Light makes a larger Discovery of what is disordered and defiled in the House; therefore such, upon the hearing of the accursed Estate of Men in Nature, of their natural Rebellion against God, and God's Displeasure against them, they are most ready, I say, to apply such Things to themselves, to the weakning of their own Hands, and sadning of their Hearts; as the upright-hearted Disciples were more ready to take with the Challenge of betraying Christ, than the false-hearted *Judas*: Therefore the Apostle prevents such an Abuse of the Doctrine, by making Application of the better Part unto the *Romans*; but for you, *ye are not of the Flesh*, &c. Indeed, Self-examination is necessary, and 'tis like the chewing of the Meat before it be sent into the Stomach, it is as necessary and precedent before right Application. I wish that every one of you would consider well what this living Word concerns you. It is the Ground of all our Barrenness; no Man brings this Home to himself, which is spoken to all: But truly the Lord speaks to all, that every Man may speak to himself, and ask at his own Heart, what is my Concernment in it? What is my Portion? As for you whom the Lord hath put upon this Search of your selves, and hath once made you to find your selves in the black Roll of Perdition, under the Hazard of the eternal Weight of God's Displeasure, and there hath shewed unto your Souls a Way of making Peace with God, and a Place of Refuge in Jesus Christ, which hath sometimes refreshed and eased your Hearts, and only was able to purify your Consciences, and calm the Storms that did arise in them; if it be henceforth your Study, *To walk to please him*, and this Engagement be on your Hearts, to make no Peace with the Flesh, and Corruption that dwells in you, then, I say, the Lord he calls and accounts you, not carnal but spiritual: Though there be much Carnality in you, yet he denominates from the better Part, not from the greatest Part, *you are not after the Flesh but after the Spirit*. Though *Isaac* be a weak young Child, and *Ishmael* the Son of the Bond-woman be a strong Man; yet thou art in God's Account esteemed according to the Promise, which shall be the Ground of thy Stability: *Isaac* must abide in the House for ever, and grow stronger and stronger, and *Ishmael* must be cast out and grow weaker and weaker: The one is ordained for Destruction, and so is called the *old Man*, drawing near to its Grave, the other for Life; and so is a new Man, renewed Day by Day. Thus they are in God's Promise, and you would learn thus to look upon it, not according to their present Inequality in Strength, but that future Inequality and Difference, which is wrapt up in the Promise of God, and the Seed whereof is in you.

As there is a woful Penury and Scantiness of Examination in the most Part of Men, who are wholly spent without, and take no Leisure to recognize their own Souls; so there is a miserable Excess, and hurtful Superfluity of Examination and Disputation among many of God's Children, who are always in Reflection, and almost never in Action; so much *on knowing what is*, that they take not much Leisure to *do*, or *pursue what is not*. Truly, I think when the Apostle commands us, *to examine, whether we be in the Faith, and prove our selves*, he did not mean, to make it our perpetual Exercise, or so to press it, as we should not endeavour to be in the Faith, till we know whether we be in it: That were

were no advancing Way, to refuse to go on in our Journey, till we know what Progress we have made, as the Custom is. But simply and plainly, I think, he intended to have Christianity begin at Examination, as the first returning of a Soul must needs be upon some Enquiry and Search of the Way, and Knowledge upon Search, that our former Way was wrong, and this is only right. But if this be the *Porch* to enter in at, will you sit down and dwell in it, and not go on into the *Palace* it self? Because you must begin to search what you have learned wrong, that now you may unlearn it, will you be ever about the learning to know your Condition; and by this Means never attain to the Knowledge of the Truth? But when you have upon any Enquiry found your selves out of the Way, you should not entertain that Dispute long, but hearken to the plain Voice of the Gospel that sounds unto you, *This is the Way, walk in it*; *I am the Way*, saith Christ, enter at me, by believing in me: Now, once having found that you are Unbelievers by Nature, to suspend believing, till you prove whether you be in the Faith, is unreasonable and impossible; for certainly having once found your selves void of it, you must first have it, before you know that you have it, you must first apply to Action, and afterward your Examination shall be more easy.

But I would tell a more profitable Improvement of such Representations of the sinful and miserable Estate of the ungodly World, than you use to make of it: And, I think, it is that the Apostles intend, in the frequent turning the Eyes of Saints about, to the accursed State of the World; *partly Consolation, and partly some Provocation to suitable Walking*. Things that are opposite are best known by Comparison one with another: Each of them cast abroad a Light to see the other by. Therefore it is that the Apostles do frequently remind the converted *Gentiles*, of the wretched Estate the World lies into, and themselves once were into. You see it, 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. *And such were some of you; but now you are washed.* And, *Eph.* ii. 1. *You who were dead in Sins hath he quickned.* There is not any Thing will more commend unto a Christian the Grace of God towards him, nor to look abroad round about him, and take a View of the whole World, lying in Wickedness; and then to look backward to what himself once was, and compare it with what the free Grace of God hath made him. O what a Soul-ravishing Contemplation is that! 1 *Joh.* v. 19. *And we know that we are of God, and the whole World lies in Wickedness*: How doth this heighten the Price of Grace, and how much doth it add to a Soul's inward Contentment, to think what it was of itself, and what it would undoubtedly have been, if not thus wonderfully surprized! One used always to look to those below him, that he might not envy those above him. Truly it might do well here, when a Christian is grieved and disquieted, because he hath not attained to that desired Measure of the Image of God, and Fellowship with him, to cast a Look about him, to the miserable and hopeless Estate of so many Thousands, who have the Image of Satan so visibly engraven on them, and have no inward Stirring after this blessed Image; and reflect a little backward, to the Hole of the Pit whence he was taken, to look upon that primitive Estate that Grace found him into, so lothsome as is described, *Ezek.* xvi. Would not such a double Sight, think you, make him break

break out in Admiration, and be powerful to silence and compose his Spirit? O to think, that I was once in that black Roll of these excluded from the Kingdom! *such were some of you*; and then to consider, that my Name was taken out, and washed by the Blood of Christ, to be enrolled in the Register of Heaven: What an astonishing Thing is it! You see in Nature, God hath appointed Contrarieties and Varieties to beautify the World; and certainly, many Things could not be known how good and beneficial they are, but by the Smart and Hurt of that which is opposite to them: As you could not imagine the Good of Light, but by some sensible Experience of the Evil of Darkness. Heat, you could not know the Benefit of it, but by the Vexation of Cold. Thus he maketh one to commend another, and both to beautify the World. It is thus in Art, Contrariety and Variety of Colours and Lines make up one Beauty: Diversity of Sounds make a sweet Harmony. Now, this is the Art and Wisdom of God, in the Dispensation of his Grace, he setteth the Misery of some, beside the Happiness of others, that each of them may aggravate another; he puts Light beside Darkness, Spirit fore-against Flesh, that so Saints may have a double Accession to their Admiration at the Goodness and Grace of God, and to their Delight and Complacency in their own Happiness: He presents the State of Men out of Christ, that you may wonder how you are translated, and may be so abundantly satisfied, as not to exchange your Portion for the greatest Monarchs.

Then, I say, *this may provoke us, and persuade us to more suitable walking.* Doth he make such a Difference? O do not you unmake it again! Do not confound all again, by your walking after the Course of the World: Conformity to the World is a Confusion of what God hath separated; his infinite Grace translated you from that Kingdom of Darkness to Light. O then walk in that Light, as Children of Light! Are you such? Own your Stations; consider your Relations, and make your selves ashamed at the very Thoughts of Sin. He points out the deformed and ugly Face of the Conversation of the World, that you may fall in Love with the Beauty of Holiness, as the *Lacedemonians* were wont to let their Children see their Slaves drunk, that the brutish and abominable Posture of such in that Sin, might imprint in the Hearts of their Children, a Detestation of such a Vice. Certainly, the Lord calls you to mind often what you have been, and what the World about you is; not to engage you to it, but to alienate your Minds from the Deformity of Sin, and to commend to you the Duty of Obedience. You would learn to make this holy Use and Advantage of all the Wickedness the World lieth into; to behold in it, as in a Glass, your own Image and Likeness; that when you use to hate or despise others, you may rather lothe and dislike your selves, as having that same common Nature; and wonder at the Goodness of God that makes such Difference, where none was. This were the Way to make Gain of the most improfitable Thing in the World, that is the Sins of other Men; for ordinarily the seeing and speaking of them, doth rather dispose us, and incline us to more Liberty to Sin. Many look on them with Delight, some with Contempt and Hatred of these that commit them, but few know how to speak or look on Sin itself with Indignation, or themselves, because of the Seeds of it within.

within them with Abhorrency. I would think if we were circumspect in this, the worse the World is, we might be the better; the worse the Times are, we might spend it better; the more Pride we see, it might make us the more humble; the more Impiety and Impurity abounds, it might provoke us to a further Distance from, and Disconformity with the World: Thus, if we were wise, we might extract Gold out of the Dung-hill, and suck Honey out of the most poisonable Weed. The surrounding Ignorance and Wickedness of the World might cause a holy *Antiperistasis* in a Christian, by making the Grace of God unite itself, and work more powerfully, as Fire out of a Cloud, and shine more brightly, as a Torch in the Darkness of the Night.

As for you, whose woful Estate is here described, who are yet in the Flesh, and Enemies to God by Nature, I would desire you to be stirred up at the Consideration of this, that there are some who are delivered out of that Prison, and that some have made Peace with God, and are no more Enemies but Friends, and Fellow-citizens of the Saints. If the Case were left wholly incurable and desperate, you had some Ground to continue in your Sins and Security; but now when you hear a Remedy is possible, and some have been helped by it, I wonder that you do not, upon this Door of Hope offered, bestir your selves, that you may be these who are here excepted. *But you are not in the Flesh*: Since some are, why may not I be? Will you awake your selves with this Alarm! If you had any Desire after this Estate, certainly such a Hope as this, would give you Feet to come to Jesus Christ; for these are the Legs of the Soul, *some Desire of a better Estate, and some Probability of it conceived by Hope.*

SERMON XXIV.

Verse 9. —— *If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

BUT will God in very deed dwell with Men on Earth! 2 Chron. vi. 18. it was the wonder of one of the wisest of Men: And indeed, considering his infinite Highness, above the Height of Heaven; his immense and incomprehensible Greatness, that the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him; and then the Baseness, Emptiness and Worthlessness of Man, it may be a Wonder to the wisest of Angels: And what is it, think you, the Angels desire to look into, but this incomprehensible Mystery, of the Descent of the most High, to dwell among the lowest and vilest of the Creatures! But as *Solomon*'s Temple, and these visible Symbols

Symbols of God's Preſence, were but Shadows of Things to come, the Subſtance whereof is exhibited under the Goſpel; ſo that Wonder was but a Shadow or Type of a greater and more real Wonder, of God's dwelling on the Earth now. It was the Wonder, ſhall God dwell with Man, among the rebellious Sons of *Adam*! But behold a greater Wonder ſince Chriſt came, God dwelling in Man, firſt perſonally in the Man Chriſt, *in whom the Fulneſs of the God-head dwelt bodily*, then graciouſly in the Seed of Chriſt, in Man by his Spirit; and this makes Men ſpiritual, *if ſo be the Spirit of Chriſt dwell in you.* You heard of the firſt In-dwelling, *ver.* 3. *God ſending his own Son in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, the Inhabitation of the divine Nature in our Fleſh, which had the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, but without Sin; for he ſanctified himſelf for our Cauſe. And truly, this myſterious and wonderful Inhabitation is not only a Pledge of the other, that God ſhall dwell in ſinful Men by his Spirit; but, in order of Nature, it hath ſome Influence upon the other, without which God could not have dwelt in us. There is ſo much Diſtance and Diſproportion between his Majeſty and us, that we could not be well united, but by this Interveening, God coming down firſt a Step into the holy Nature of the Man Chriſt, that from thence he might go into the ſinful Nature of other Men. Our ſinful and rebellious Nature behooved to be firſt ſanctified this Way, by the perſonal In-dwelling of God in our Fleſh; and this had made an eaſy Paſſage into ſinful us, for his Spirit to dwell into us powerfully and graciouſly; therefore the Spirit of Chriſt is ſaid to dwell in us. *Chriſt's Spirit*, not only becauſe proceeding from him as from the Father; but particularly, becauſe the Inhabitation or Operation of the Spirit in us is the proper Reſult and Fruit of that glorious Union of our Nature with him. He took our Fleſh, that he might ſend us his Spirit. And, O what a bleſſed Exchange was this! He came and dwelt in our Nature, that ſo he might dwell in us: He took up a Shop, as it were, in our Fleſh, that he might work in us, and make us again conformed to God.

We ſhall not cut this aſunder into many Parts; you ſee the Words contain plainly *the very eſſential Definition of a ſpiritual Man, and of a Chriſtian.* You find a ſpiritual Man and a Chriſtian equivalent in this *Ver.* that is to ſay, they are taken for one and the ſelf ſame Thing, and ſo they are reciprocal of equal Extent and Reſtraint; every Chriſtian is one after the Spirit, and whoſoever is after the Spirit is a Chriſtian; one of Chriſt's, and one after the Spirit is one Thing. Now the Definition of the Chriſtian is taken from that which really and eſſentially conſtitutes him ſuch. He is one in whom the Spirit of Chriſt dwells; that makes him One after the Spirit, that makes him One of Chriſt's, becauſe it is the Spirit of Chriſt. As if you define what a Man is, you could not do it better than thus, He is one endowed with a reaſonable Soul. So the Apoſtle gives you the very Soul and Form of a Chriſtian, which differenceth from all others. As the Soul is to the Body to make up a Man, ſo the Spirit of Chriſt is to the Soul and Spirit of a Man, to make up a Chriſtian; as the Abſence or Preſence of the Soul makes or un-makes a Man, ſo the Abſence or Preſence of this Spirit makes or unmakes a Chriſtian, for you ſee he makes it reciprocal. If you be Chriſtians, the Spirit dwells in

you, but if the Spirit dwell not in you, you are not Christians.

A Word then to the first of these, *That a Christian and a spiritual Man are commensurable one to another.* It is true, *there are Jews who are not Jews inwardly, but only according to the Letter*, Rom. ii. 28, 29. And so there are Christians so called, who are but so outwardly, and in the Letter, who have no more of it but the Name and visible standing in the Church; but we are speaking of that which is truly that which it is called, *whose Praise is not of Men but of God.* The Name of a Man may be extended to a Picture or Image, for some outward Resemblance it hath of him, but it is not a proper Speech; no more is it proper to extend the Name of *Christians* unto the Pictures or Images of Christians, such as are destitute of this inward Life. You may be properly, according to Scripture-phrase, Members of the visible Body; but you cannot have that real and blessed Relation to Jesus Christ the Head, which shall be the Source of Happiness to all the living Members. I wish you would take it so, and flatter your selves no more with Church-titles, as if these were sufficient Evidences for your Salvation. You would all be called Christians; but it fears me you know not many of you the true Meaning and Signification of that Word, the most comfortable Sense of it is hid from you. The meaning of it is, *That a Man is renewed by Christ in the Spirit of his Mind.* As Christ and the Spirit are inseparable, so a Christian and a spiritual Nature are not to be found severed. Certainly, the very Sound of the Name whereby you are called, imports another Nature and Conversation than is to be found in many: You cannot say that you have a Shadow of Spirituality, either in your Affections or Actions; or that you have any real Design and Study that Way, but only to please your Flesh, and satisfy the Customs of the World: Why do you then usurp *the Name of Christianity?* This is a *common Sacrilege*, to give that which is holy unto Dogs. Others give it to you, and you take it to your selves. But know, that tho' you please your selves and others in this; yet without such a Renovation of your Natures, and such a sincere Study to be inwardly and outwardly conformed to the Profession and Name of Christianity, you have not your Praise of God, and him whom God praises, not and allows not, he cannot bless for ever. I am persuaded, there are some who are not only in the Letter, but in the Spirit, whose greatest Desire and Design is, to be indeed what they profess; and such their Praise is of God, and if God praise them now, they shall be made to praise him for ever hereafter: Such are allowed to take the Name and honourable Stile of *Christianity* unto them. You are Christ's, nearly interested in him: And if you be Christ's own, he cannot be happy without you; for such was his Love, that he would not be happy alone in Heaven, but come down to be miserable with us. And now that he is again happy in Heaven, certainly he cannot enjoy it long alone, but he must draw up his Members unto the Fellowship of that Glory.

Now the other Thing, that which gives even Being to a Christian, is, *The Spirit of Christ dwelling in him.* Of this Inhabitation, we shall not say so much as the Comparison, being strained, will yield, neither expatiate into many Notions about it. I wish rather we went Home with some Desires kindled in us, after such a noble Guest as the *Holy Spirit is*, and that we were begun once to weary

of

of the base and unclean Guests that we lodge within us, to our own Destruction. That which I said, *That the Spirit is to a Christian, what the Soul is to a Man*, if well considered, might present the absolute Necessity and the Excellency of this unto your Eyes. Consider what a Thing the Body is without the Soul, how defiled and deformed a Piece of Dust it is, void of all Sense and Life, lothsome to look upon. Truly the Soul of Man by Nature is in no better Case, till this Spirit enter; it hath no Light in it, no Life in it; it is a dark Dungeon, such as is described, *Eph.* iv. 18. *Having the Understanding darkned, being alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Hearts.* You have both in that Word *Darkness* and *Deadness*; Want of that shining Light of God in the Mind, so that it cannot discern spiritual Things, that makes to our eternal Peace: All the Plainness and Evidence of the Gospel, though it did shine as a Sun about you, cannot make you see or apprehend either your own Misery, or the Way to help it; because your Dungeon is within; the most Part cannot form any sensible Notion of spiritual Things, that are daily sounding unto them in the Word. The Eye of the Mind is put out, and if it be Darkness, how great is that Darkness? Certainly the whole Man is without Light, and your Way and Walk must be in the Dark; and indeed it appears, that it is dark Night with many Souls, because if it were not dark, they could not run out all their speed among Pits and Snares in the Way to Destruction. And from this woful Defect flows the Alienation of the whole Soul from the Life of God; that primitive Light being ecclipsed, the Soul is separated from the Influence of Heaven: And as *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Soul acted only in a brutal Way, when driven out among Beasts; so the Soul of Man, being driven out from the Presence of the Lord, may act in a Way common to Beasts, or in some rational Way in Things that concern this Life, but it is wholly spoiled of that Divine Life of Communion with God; it cannot taste, smell or savour such Things. O! if it were visible unto us, the State of the ruinous Soul, we would raise a more bitter Lamentation over it, than the *Jews* did over *Jerusalem*, or the Kings and Merchants have reason to do over fallen *Babylon*. Truly, we might bemoan it thus, *How is the faithful City become a Harlot, Righteousness lodged in it, but now Murderers*, Isa. i 21. Man was once the Dwelling-place of princely and divine Graces and Virtues, the Lord himself was there, and then how comely and beautiful was the Soul! But now it is like the desolate Cities, in which the Beasts of the Desart ly, and their Houses are full of doleful Creatures, where Owls dwell, and Satyrs dance, where wild Beasts cry and Dragons in the pleasant Places, *Isa.* xiii. 21, 22. and *Jer.* l. 39. So mighty is the Fall of the Soul of Man, as of *Babylon*, that it may be cried, *It is fallen, and become the Habitation of Devils, and the Hold of every foul Spirit, and a Cage of very unclean and hateful Bird*, Rev. xviii. 2. All the Beasts flock now to it, all the Birds of Darkness take their Lodging in it, since this noble Guest left it, and took away the Light from it; for the Sun hath not shined on it since that Day: All unclean Affections, all beastly Lusts all earthly Desires, all vain Cogitations, get Lodging in this House, the *Bethel* is become a *Beth-aven*,

even, the House of God become a *House of Vanity*, by the continual Repair of vain Thoughts; the *House of Prayer* is turned into *a Den of Thieves and Robbers*. That which was at first created for the pure Service and Worship of God, is now a Receptacle of all the most rebellious and idolatrous Thoughts and Affections; the Heart of every Man is become a Temple full of Idols.

This is the State of it, and worse than can be told you: Now, judge if there be not need of a better Guest than these. O what absolute Necessity is there of such a Spirit as this, to repair and reform the ruinous Spirit of Man, to quicken and enlighten the darkned Mind of Man! Even *that Spirit*, that made it first a glorious Palace for God; *that Spirit* that breathed the Soul into the formed Clay, must repair these Breaches, and create all again. Now, when *the Spirit of Christ* enters into this vile and ruinous Cottage, he repairs it, and reforms it, he strikes out Lights in the Heart, and, by a wonderful Eye-salve, makes the Eyes open to see: He creates a new Light within, which makes him behold the Light shining in the Gospel; and behold all Things are new, *himself* new, because now most lothsome and vile; the *World* new, because now appears nothing but Vanity in the very Perfection of it; and *God* new, because another Majesty, Glory, Excellency and Beauty shines into the Soul, than ever it apprehended. And as the Spirit enlightens, so he enlivens this Tabernacle or Temple; he kindles a holy Fire in his Affections, which must never go out; it is such as cannot be kindled, if it go out, but by the Beams of the Sun, as the Poet fancied the Vestal-fire. The Spirit within the Soul is a Fire to consume his Corruption, to burn up his Dross and Vanity: Christ comes in like a Refiner, with the Fire of the Spirit, and purges away earthly Lusts, and makes the Love of the Heart pure and clean, to burn upward toward Heaven. This *Spirit* makes a Christian-soul move willingly toward God, in the Ways that seemed most unpleasant: It is an active Principle within him that cannot rest, till it rests in its Place of eternal Rest and Delight in God. And then the *Spirit* reforms this House, by casting out all these wild Beasts that lodged in it, the savage and unruly Affections that domineered in Man; this strong Man entering in, casts them out; there is much Rubbish in old waste Palaces, *Neh.* iv. 2. O how much Pains is it to cleanse them! Our House is like the House of these Nobles, *Jer.* v. 27. *Full of Deceit, as a Cage is full of Birds*, and *our Hearts full of Wickedness and Vanity*, Jer. iv. 14. Certainly it will be much Labour to get your unclean Spirits cast out, that is, the grosser and more palpable Lusts that reign in you; but when these are gone forth, yet there is much Wickedness and Uncleanness in the Heart, of a more subtile Nature, and, by long In-dwelling, almost incorporated and mingled with the Soul; and this will not be gotten out with gentle Sweeping, as was done, *Luke* xi. 25. That takes away only the uppermost Filth that lies loosest; but this must be gotten out by much washing and cleansing; and therefore the Spirit enters by Blood and Water. There are Idols in the Heart, to which the Soul is much engaged; it unites and closes with them, *Ezek.* xxxvi. and these must be cleansed and washed out. There is much Deceit in the Heart, and this lies closest to it, and is engrossed into it: And indeed this will take the Help of Fire to separate it; for that is of the most active Nature to

separate

ſeparate Things of a diverſe Nature; the Spirit muſt by theſe take out your Droſs. And all this the Spirit will not do alone, but honours you with the Fellowſhip of this Work; and therefore you muſt lay your Account, that the Operation and Reformation of this Houſe, for ſo glorious a Gueſt, will be laborious in the mean Time. But O how infinitely is that compenſed! One Hour's Fellowſhip with him alone, when all Strangers are caſt out, will compenſe all, will make all to be forgotten; the Pain of Mortification will be ſwallowed up in the Pleaſure of his Inhabitation: *When I ſhall awake I ſhall be ſatisfied with thy Likeneſs.* When he ſhall take up Houſe fully in you, it will ſatisfy you to the full. In the mean Time, as he takes the Rule and Command of your Houſe, ſo for the preſent he provides for it, the Proviſion of the Soul is incumbent on this Divine Gueſt: And O how ſweet and ſatisfying is it! O the Peace and Joy of the Holy Ghoſt, which are the Entertainment that he gives a Soul, where he reigns, and hath brought in Righteouſneſs, *Rom.* xiv. 17. What a noble Train doth the Spirit bring alongſt with him, to furniſh this Houſe? Many rich and coſtly Ornaments hang over it, and adorn it, to make it like the King's Wife, *all glorious within*; ſuch as, the Ornament *of a meek and quiet Spirit*, 1 Pet. iii. 4. which is a far more precious and rich Hanging, than the moſt curious or precious Contexture of corruptible Things; the Cloathing of Humility, ſimple in Shew, but rich in Subſtance, 1 *Pet.* v. 5. which enriches and beautifies the Soul that hath it, more than all *Solomon's* Glory could do in his Perſon; for *better is it to be of a humble Spirit with the lowly, than divide the Spoil with the proud*, Prov. xvi. 19. In a Word, the Spirit makes all new, puts a new Man, a new Faſhion and Image on the Soul, which ſuits the Court of Heaven, the higheſt in the World; and is conformed to the nobleſt and higheſt Pattern, the Holineſs and Beauty of the greateſt King. And being lodged within, O what ſweet Fruits is the Spirit daily bringing forth to feed and delight the Soul withal! *Gal.* v. 22, 23. And he is not only a Spirit of Sanctification, but of Conſolation too; and therefore of all, the moſt worthy to be received into our Hearts, for he is a Boſom-comforter, *Joh.* xiv. 16. when there is no Friend nor Lover without, but a Soul in that Poſture of *Heman*, *Pſal.* lxxxviii. 18: and in that deſolate Eſtate of the Churches, *Jer. Lam.* i. 2. *Among all her Lovers ſhe hath none to comfort her.* ver. 17. *Spreading forth her Hands, and none to comfort him.* ver, 21. *Sighing, and none to comfort her.* In ſuch a Caſe to have a living and over-running Spring of Comfort within, when all external and lower Conſolations, like Winter-brooks that dry up in Summer, have dried up and diſappointed thy Expectation; ſure this were a happy Gueſt, that could do this. O that we could open our Hearts to receive him!

SERMON XXV.

Ver. 9. —— *If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

THere is a great Marriage spoken of *Eph.* v. that hath a great Mystery in it, which the Apostle propoundeth as the Sample and Archetype of all Marriages, or rather as the Substance, of which all Conjunctions and Relations among the Creatures are but the Shadows. It is that Marriage between Christ and his Church, for which it would appear this World was builded, to be a Palace to celebrate it into; and especially the Upper-house, Heaven, was made glorious for that great Day, where it shall be solemnized. The first *in order of Time*, was made by God himself in Paradise, certainly to represent a higher Mystery, the Marriage of the second *Adam* with his Spouse, which is taken out of his bloody Side, as the Apostle imports, *Eph.* v. Now there is the greatest Inequality and Disproportion between the Parties, *Christ and Sinners*; so that it would seem a desperate Matter to bring two such distant and unequal Natures to such a near Union, as may cast a Copy to all Unions and Relations of the Creatures. But he, who at first made a kind of Marriage between Heaven and Earth, in the Composure of Man, and joined together an immortal Spirit in such a Bond of Amity with corruptible Dust, hath found out the Way to help this, and make it feasable: And truly, we may conceive the Lord was but making Way for this greater Mystery of the Union of Christ with us, when he joined the Breath of Heaven with the Dust of the Earth; in this he gave some Representation of another more mysterious Conjunction. Now, the Way that the Wisdom and Love of God hath found out to bring about this Marriage, is this; because there was such an infinite Distance between the only begotten Son of God, who is the express Character of his Image, and the Brightness of his Glory, and us sinful mortal Creatures, whose Foundation is in the Dust; therefore it pleased the Father, out of his Good-will to the Match, to send his Son down among Men, and the Son, out of his Love, to take on our Flesh, and so fill up that Distance with his low Condescendence, to be Partaker of Flesh and Blood with the Children. And now, what the Lord spoke of Man fallen, in a holy kind of *Irony* or Mock, *Behold he is become as one of us*, that Men may truly say of the Son of God, not fallen down from Heaven, but come down willingly, *Lo he is become as one of us, like*

like us in all Things, except Sin, which hath made us unlike our selves. This Bond of Union you have in the *ver.* 3. Christ so infinitely above Sinners, and higher than the Heavens, coming down so low, to be as like Sinners as might be, or could be profitable for us, *in the Likeness of sinful Flesh,* &c. But yet this Bond is not near enough, that Conjunction seemeth but general and infirm; both because it is in some Manner common to all Mankind, who shall not be all advanced to this Privilege. By taking on our Nature, he cometh nearer to humane Nature, but not to some beyond others; and besides, the Distance is not filled up this Way, because there is a great Disproportion between that Nature in Christ and in us: In him, it is holy and undefiled, and separated from Sin; but in us, it is unclean and immersed into Sin; so that, albeit he be nearer us as a Man, yet he is far distant and unlike us, a holy, perfect Man: Now, *what Fellowship can be between Light and Darkness?* As *Paul* speaketh of the Marriage of Christians with Idolaters; much greater Distance and Disagreement is between Christ and us. Therefore, it seemeth, that some of us must be changed and transformed: But *him* it may not be; he cannot become liker us than by partaking of our Flesh; for if he had become a Sinner *indeed*, he would have become so like us, that he could not help himself nor us either; this would eclipse the Glory and Happiness of the Marriage. But in that he came as near as could be, with [illegible] himself, to make us happy; and so he was contented to come in the Place of Sinners, and [illegible] Debt; and answer to God's Justice for us, and in his own Person, he submitted to be tempted to Sin, though it had been evil for us he had been overcome by it; yet this brings him a Step lower and nearer us, and maketh the Union more hopeful. But since he can come no lower, and can be made no liker us in the Case we are in; then certainly, (if the Match hold) we must become liker him, and raised up out of our miserable Estate, to some Suitableness to his holy Nature; and therefore the Love and Wisdom of God, to fill up the Distance completely, and effectuate this happy Conjunction, that the Creation seemeth to groan for (*for,* ver. 22. *the whole Creation is pained till it be accomplished*) he hath sent his blessed *Spirit to dwell in us,* and to transform our Natures, and *make them Partakers of the Divine Nature,* 2 Pet. i. 4. as Christ was Partaker of humane Nature; and thus the Distance shall be removed; when a blessed Spirit is made Flesh, and a fleshly Man made Spirit, then they are near the Day of Espousals; and this Indwelling of the Spirit is the last Link of the Chain that fastens us to Christ, and maketh our Flesh in some Measure like his holy Flesh. By taking on our Flesh, Christ became Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh: But the Union becometh mutual, when we receive the Spirit; we become *Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh,* as it is expressed, *Eph.* v. 30. in Allusion to the Creation of *Eve,* and her Marriage to *Adam*; the Ground of the Marriage is, that near Bond of Union, *because she was taken out of Man,* and therefore because of his Flesh and Bone she was made *one Flesh with him*; even so the *Sinner* must be Partaker of the *Spirit of Christ,* as *Christ* is Partaker of the *Flesh of Sinners*; and these two concurring, these two Knots interchanging and woven through other, we become one Flesh with him. And this is a great Mystery indeed, to bring two, who

who were so far asunder, so near other. Yea, it is nearer than that too; for we are said, not only to be *one Flesh* with Christ, but *one Spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. *He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit*; because he is animated and quickned by one Spirit, that same Spirit of Christ; and indeed *Spirits* are more capable of Union, and more fit to embosom one with another than *Bodies*; therefore the neareſt Union conceivable, is *the Union of Spirits by Affection*; this maketh two Souls one, for it transports their Spirit out of the Body, where it *lives*, and settleth it there where it *loveth*.

Now, my Beloved, you see what Way this great Marriage, that Heaven and Earth are in a longing Expectation after, shall be brought about. Christ he did forsake his Father's House, when he left that holy Habitation, his Father's Bosom, a Place of marvellous Delight, *Pro.* viii. 30. *And descended into the lowest Parts of the Earth*, Eph. iv. 9. And, *he came out from the Father into the World*, Joh. xvi. 28. This was a great Journey to meet with poor Sinners. But, that there may be a full and entire Meeting, *you must leave and forsake your Father's House too, and forget your own People*, Psal. xlv. 10. You must give an entire Renounce to all former Lovers, if you would be his; all former Bonds and Engagements must be broken, that this may be tied the faster. And to hold to the Subject in Hand, you must forsake and forget the Flesh, and be possessed of his Holy Spirit; as he came down to our Flesh, you must rise up to meet him in the Spirit; the Spirit of Christ must indeed prevent you, and take you out of that natural Posture you are born into, and bring you a great Journey from *your selves*, that you may be joined unto *him*.

This *Spirit of Christ* is his Messenger and Ambassador sent before-hand to fit you, and suit you for the Day of Espousals; and therefore he must have a Dwelling and constant Abode in you. This *Indwelling* imports, *A special familiar Operation, and the Perpetuity or Continuance of it*. The *Spirit* is every where in his *Being*, and he worketh every where too; but here he hath a special and peculiar Work in Commission, to reveal the Love of God in Christ; to engage the Soul to love him again, to prepare all within for the great Day of Espousals, to purify and purge the Heart from all that is displeasing to Christ, to correspond between Christ and his Spouse, between Heaven and Earth, by making Intercession for her when she cannot pray for her self, as you find here, *Ver.* 26. and so sending up the News of the Soul's panting and breathing after Christ, sending up her Love, Groans and Sighs to her Beloved, giving Intelligence of all her Necessities to him, who is above, in the Place of an *Advocate* and *Interceeder*; and then bringing back from Heaven, Light and Life, Direction from her Head (for the Spirit must lead into all Truth) and Consolation; for Christ hath appointed the Spirit, to supply his Absence, and to comfort the Soul in the mean Time till he come again: You have this mutual and reciprocal Knot in 1 *Joh.* iv. 13. *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, by the Spirit that he hath given.* It is much Nearness *to dwell one with another*, [illegible] much greater, *to dwell one in another*: And 'tis reciprocal, such a wonderful Interchange in it, *we in him, and he in us*: For the Spirit carries the

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Soul to Heaven, and brings Christ, as it were, down to the Earth: He is the Messenger that carries Letters between both; our Prayers to him, and his Prayers for us, and Love-tokens to us, *the anointing that teacheth us all Things*, from our Husband, 1 John ii. 27. and *revealing to us the Things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 12. giving us the First-fruits of that happy and glorious Communion we must have with Christ in Heaven, as you see, *Ver.* 23. of this *Chap.* and *Sealing us to the Day of Redemption*, Eph. i. 13. and iv. 30. Supplying us with Divine Power against our spiritual Enemies, fetching alongs from Heaven that Strength whereby our Lord and Saviour overcame all, *Eph.* iii. 16. *Gal.* v. 17. This is a Presence that few have, such a familiar and Love-abode: But certainly, all that are Christ's must have it in some Measure: Now, whosoever hath it, 'tis perpetual, *the Spirit dwells in them*: 'Tis not a Sojourning for a Season, not a Lodging for a Night, as some have Fits and Starts of seeking God, and some transient Motions of Conviction or Joy, but return again to the Puddle; these go through them as Lightning, and do not warm them, or change them; but this is a constant Residence; where the Spirit takes up House he will dwell, *he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you, and abide for ever*, John xiv. 16, 17. *If the Son abide in the House for ever*, Joh. viii. 35. much more the Master of the House must abide. Now the Spirit, where he dwells, hath gotten the Command of that House; all the Power is put in his Hand, and resigned to him; for where he dwells, he must rule, as good Reason is; he is about the greatest Work that is now to do in the World, the Repairing and Renewing of the Ruins and Breaches of Man's Spirit, which was the first Breach in the Creation, and the Cause of all the rest: He is about the cleansing and washing this Temple, and we may be persuaded *that he who hath begun this good Work, will perform it until the Day of Christ, till we be presented blameless and without Spot to our Husband*, Phil. i. 5, 6. and this is the grand Consolation of Believers, that they have this Presence assured to them by Promise; that the Spirit is fixed here by an irrevocable and unchangeable Covenant or Donation, and will not wholly depart from them, though he may withdraw and leave you comfortless for a Season, *Isa.* lix. 21.

Therefore I would shut up all in a Word of Exhortation to you, That since we have the Promise of so noble and happy a Guest, you would apply your selves to seek him, and then keep him; to receive him, and then retain him. It is true that he must first prevent us; for as no Man can say, *that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Spirit of God*, so no Man can indeed pray for the Spirit, but by the Spirit's own Intercession within him. Where God hath bestowed any Thing of this Spirit, it is known by the kindly and fervent Desires after more of it. Now, since we have such a large and ample Promise, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 27. *Joel.* ii. 28. *of the pouring out of the Spirit*, and that in as absolute and free a Manner as can be imagined; and this renewed by Christ, and confirmed by his Prayer to the Father for the Performance of it, *Joh.* xiv. 16, 17. and then we have a sweet and affectionate Promise propounded in the most moving and loving Manner that can be, *Luk.* xi. 13. where he encourageth us to pray for the Spirit, and that from this Ground, that our heavenly Father, who placed that natural Affection in other Fathers towards their Children, whereby they cannot re-

fuſe them Bread when they cry for it; he, who was the Author of all natural Affection, muſt certainly tranſcend them infinitely in his Love to his Childern, as the *Pſalmiſt* argues, *Shall not he that planted the Ear, hear, and he that formed the Eye, ſee?* So may a poor Soul reaſon itſelf to ſome Confidence, Shall not he who is the Fountain of all natural Love in Men and Beaſts have much more himſelf? And if my Father will not give me a Stone when I ſeek Bread, certainly he will far leſs do it: Therefore, *if we being Evil, know how to give good Things to our Children, how much more ſhall our heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him.* Alas, that we ſhould want ſuch a Gift for not asking it! My beloved, let us enlarge our Deſires for this Spirit, and ſeek more earneſtly; and no doubt *Affection* and *Importunity* will not be ſent away empty. Is it any wonder we receive not, becauſe we ask not, or we ask ſo coldly, that we teach him in a manner to deny us, *qui timide rogat*, I may ſay, *frigide, docet negare.* Ask frequently, and ask confidently, and his Heart cannot deny. O that we could lay this Engagement on our own Hearts to be more in Prayer! Let us preſs our ſelves to this, and we need not preſs him; albeit the firſt Grace be wholly a Surpriſal, yet certainly he keeps this ſuitable Method in the Enlargements of Grace, that when he gives more, he enlargeth the Heart more after it, he openeth the Mouth wider to ask and receive, and, according to that Capacity, ſo is his Hand opened to fill the Heart. O, why are our Hearts ſhut, when his Hand is open! Again, I would exhort you in Jeſus Chriſt, to entertain the Spirit ſuitably, and this ſhall keep him. To this Purpoſe are theſe Exhortations, *Grieve not the Spirit*, Eph. iv. 30. and *Quench not the Spirit*, 1 Theſ. v. 19. There is nothing can grieve him, but Sin; and if you entertain *that*, you cannot retain him. He is a Spirit of Holineſs, and he is about the making you holy; then do not mar him in his Work; labour to advance this, and you do him a Pleaſure. If you make his holy Temple an unclean Cage for hateful Birds, or a Temple for Idols, how can it but grieve him? And if you grieve the Spirit, certainly the Spirit will grieve you, will make you repent it at the Heart. Pleaſe him, by hearkning to his Motions, and following his Direction, and he ſhall comfort you. His Office is to be a Spring of Conſolation to you; but if you grieve him by walking in the Imagination of your Hearts, and following the Suggeſtions of the Fleſh, *his Enemy*, no doubt that Spring will turn its Channel another Way, and dry up for a Seaſon toward you. It is not every Sin or Infirmity that grieves him thus, if ſo be that it grieve thee; but the entertaining of any Sin, and making Peace with any of his Enemies, that cannot but diſpleaſe him: And O what Loſs you have by it! You diſpleaſe your greateſt Friend, to pleaſe your greateſt Enemy; you blot and bludder that Seal of the Spirit, that you ſhall not be able to read it, till it be cleanſed and waſhed again. Now, *If any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*, he is not a Chriſtian: Take this alongs with you, who aim at nothing but the external and outward Shew or viſible ſtanding in the Church; if you have not this Spirit, and the Seal of this Spirit, found on you, Chriſt will not know you for his in that Day of his appearing.

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SERMON XXVI.

Verse 10. *And if Christ be in you, the Body is dead because of Sin: But the Spirit is Life, because of Righteousness.*

GOD's *Presence* is his *Working*; his Presence in a Soul by his Spirit is his Working in such a Soul in some special Manner, not common to all Men, but peculiar to them whom he hath chosen. Now his *Dwelling* is nothing else, but a continued, familiar and endless Working in a Soul, till he have conformed all within to the Image of his Son. The Soul is the *Office-house*, or *Work-house* that the Spirit hath taken up, to frame in it the most curious Piece of the whole Creation, even to restore and repair that Masterpiece, which came last from God's Hand, *ab ultima manu*, and so was the chiefest; I mean, the Image of God, in Righteousness and Holiness. Now, *this* is the Bond of Union between God and us: *Christ* is the Bond of Union with God, but the *Spirit* is the Bond of Union with Christ. *Christ* is the *Peace* between God and us, that makes of two one, but the *Spirit* is the *Link* between Christ and us, whereby he hath immediate and actual Interest in us, and we in him. I find the Union between Christ and a Soul shadowed out in Scripture, by the neareſt Relations among Creatures, (for truly these are but Shadows, and that is the Body or Substance) and because an Union that is mutual, is neareſt, it is often so expressed, as it imports an interchangeable Relation, a reciprocal Conjunction with Christ. The Knot is cast on both Sides to make it strong, Christ in us, and we in him: God dwelling in us, and we in him; and both by this *one Spirit*, 1 John iv. 13. *Hereby we know that God dwelleth in us, and we in him, by his Spirit which he hath given us*. You find it often in *John*, who being most possessed with the Love of Christ, and most sensible of his Love, could best express it: *I in them, and they in me. He that keepeth his Commands dwelleth in him, and he in him*; as the Names of married Persons are spelled through other, so doth he spell out this indwelling; 'tis not *Cohabitation*, but *Inhabitation*; neither that alone singly, but *mutual Inhabitation*, which amounts to a kind of *Penetration*, the most intimate and immediate Presence imaginable. *Christ dwelleth in our Hearts by Faith*; *and we dwell in Christ by Love*, Eph. i. 7. and 1 John iv. *Death*, bringeth him into the Heart; for it is the very Application of a Saviour to a sinful Soul. It is the very applying of his Blood and Sufferings to the Wound that Sin hath made in the Conscience; the laying of that Sacrifice propitiatory to the wounded Conscience, is that which heals it, pacifies it,

and calms it. A Christian, by receiving the Offer of the Gospel cordially and affectionately, brings in Christ offered into his House, and then *Salvation* comes with him. Therefore, *believing* is *receiving*, Joh. 1. the very Opening of the Heart to let in an offered Saviour; and then Christ, thus possessing the Heart by *Faith*, he works by *Love*, and *he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*. *Love* hath this special Vertue in it, that it transports the Soul in a Manner out of itself, to the Beloved, *Cant.* i. 9. *Anima est ubi amat, non ubi animat*; the fixing and establishing of the Heart on God, is a *dwelling in him*; for the constant and most continued Residence of the most serious Thoughts and Affections, will be their dwelling in the All-fulness and Riches of Grace in Jesus Christ; as the Spirit dwelleth where he worketh, so the Soul dwelleth where it delighteth; its Complacency in God maketh a frequent Issue or Outgoing to him in Desires and Breathings after him: And by Means of this same, God dwelleth in the Heart; for *Love* is the opening up of the inmost Chamber of the Heart to him, it brings in the Beloved into the very Secrets of the Soul, *to ly all Night betwixt his Breasts; as a Bundle of Myrrh*, Can. i. 13. And indeed all the sweet Odours of holy Duties, and all the performing of good Works, and edifying Speeches, spring out only, and are sent forth from this Bundle of Myrrh that lies betwixt the Breasts of a Christian, in the inmost of his Heart, from Christ dwelling in the Affections of the Soul.

Now this being the Bond of Union betwixt Christ and us, it follows necessarily, that whoever hath not the Spirit of Christ, *he is none of his*; and this is subjoined for Prevention or Removal of the Misapprehensions and Delusions of Men in their Self-judgings: Because *Self-love* blinds our Eyes, and maketh our Hearts deceive themselves; we are given to this Self-flattery, to pretend and claim to an Interest in Jesus Christ, even though there be no more Evidence for it, than the external Relation that we have to Christ, as Members of his visible Body, or Partakers of a common Influence of his Spirit. There are some external Bonds and Tyes to Christ, which are like a Knot that may easily be loosed, if any Thing get hold of the End of it; as by our Relations to Christ by Baptism, hearing the Word, your outward Covenanting to be his People; all these are loose unsure Knots: It is as easy to unty them, as to ty them, yea, and more easy; and yet many have no other Relation to Christ, than what these make. But it is only the *Spirit of Christ* given to us that entitles and interesteth us in him, and him in us; 'tis the *Spirit* working in your Souls mightily and continually, making your Hearts Temples, for the offering of the Sacrifice of Prayer and Praises, casting out all Idols out of these Temples, that he alone may be adored and worshipped, by the affectionate Service of the Heart, purging them from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit; it is the *Spirit*, I say, thus dwelling in Men, that maketh them living Members of the true Body of Christ, lively joined to the Head, *Christ*; this maketh him yours, and you his; by vertue of this he may command you as his own, and you may use and imploy him as your own. Now, for want of this in most Part of Men, they also want this living, saving Interest in Christ; they have no real, but an imaginary and notional Propriety and Right to the Lord Jesus; for Christ must first take Possession of us by his *Spirit*,

rit, before we have any true Right to *him*, or can willingly resign our selves to him, and give him Right over us. What shall it profit us, my Beloved, to be called Christians, and to esteem our selves so, if really we be none of Christ's? Shall it not heighten our Condemnation, so much the more, that we desire to pass for such, and give out our selves so; and yet have no inward Acquaintance and Interest in him, whose Name we love to bear? Are not the most Part Shadows and Pictures of true Christians, Bodies without the Soul of Christianity, that is, *the Spirit of Christ*, whose Hearts are Treasures of Wickedness and Deceit, and Store-houses of Iniquity and Ignorance. It may be known what Treasure fills the Heart, by that which is the constant and common Vent of it, as our Saviour speaks, *Matth.* xv. 19. and xii. 34, 35. *Out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaks*, the Feet walks, and the Hand works: Consider then, if the Spirit of God dwelleth in such unclean Habitations and dark Dungeons; certainly no Uncleanness or Darkness of the House can hinder him to come in; but it is a sure Argument and Evidence that he is not as yet come in, because the Prince of Darkness is not yet cast out of many Souls, nor yet the unclean Spirits that lodge within: These haunt your Hearts, and are as familiar now as ever. Sure I am, many Souls have never yet changed their Guests, and it is as sure that the first Guest that taketh up the Soul, is Darkness and desperate Wickedness, with unparalleled Deceitfulness; there is an accursed Trinity, instead of that blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and when this holy Trinity cometh in to dwell, that other of Hell must go out. Now, my Beloved, do you think this a light Matter, to be disowned by Jesus Christ: Truly, the Word of Christ, which is the Character of all our Evidences and Rights for Heaven, disowns many, as Bastards and dead Members, withered Branches; and certainly, according to this Word he will judge you: *The Word that I have spoken shall judge you in the last Day*: O that is a heavy Word! You have the very Rule and Method of proceeding laid down before you now, which shall be punctually kept at that great Day: Now, why do you not read your Ditty and condemnatory Sentence here registered? If you do not read it now, in your Consciences, he will one Day read it before Men and Angels, and pronounce this, *I know you not for mine, you are none of mine.* But if you would now take it to your Hearts, there might be Hope that it should go no further, and come to no more publick hearing; there were Hope that it should be repealed before that Day, because the first Entry of the Spirit of Christ, is to convince Men of Sin, that they are Unbelievers, and without God in the World; and if this were done, then it were more easy to convince you of Christ's Righteousness, and persuade you to embrace it; and this would lead in another Link of the Chain, *the Conviction of Judgment*, to persuade you to resign your selves to the Spirit's Rule, and renounce the Kingdom of Satan; this were another Trinity, a Trinity upon Earth, three bearing Witness on the Earth that you have the Spirit of God.

Verse

Verſ. 10. *And if Chriſt be in you, the Body is dead becauſe of Sin*, &c.

ALL the preceeding Verſes ſeem to be purpoſely ſet down by the Apoſtle for the Comfort of Chriſtians, againſt the Remnants of Sin and Corruption within them; for in the preceeding Chapter, he perſonates the whole Body of Chriſt Militant, ſhewing in his own Example how much Sin remains in the Holieſt in this Life, and this he rather inſtances in his own Perſon than another, that all may know that Matter of continual Sorrow and Lamentation is furniſhed to the chiefeſt of Saints; and yet in this Chapter, he propounds the Conſolation of Chriſtians more generally, that all may know, that theſe Privileges and Immunities belong even to the meaneſt and weakeſt of Chriſtians; that as the beſt have Reaſon to mourn in themſelves, ſo the worſt want not Reaſon to rejoice in Jeſus Chriſt. And this would always be minded, that the ampleſt Grounds of the ſtrongeſt Conſolation are general *to all* that come indeed to Jeſus Chriſt, and are not reſtricted unto Saints of ſuch and ſuch a Growth and Stature; the common Principles of the Goſpel are more full of this Milk of Conſolation, if you would ſuck it out of them, than many particular Grounds which you are laying down for your ſelves. God hath ſo diſpoſed and contrived the Work of our Salvation, that in this Life he that hath gathered much, in ſome reſpect hath nothing over, that is to ſay, hath no more Reaſon to boaſt than another, but will be conſtrained to ſit down and mourn over his own evil Heart, and the Emptineſs of it; and he that hath gathered leſs, hath in ſome Senſe no Want: I mean, he is not excluded and ſhut out from the Right to theſe glorious Privileges, which may expreſs Gloriation and Rejoicings from the Heart, that there might be an Equality in the Body; he maketh the ſtronger Chriſtian to partake with the weaker in his bitter Things, and the weaker with the ſtronger in his ſweet Things; that none of them may conceive themſelves either deſpiſed, or alone regarded; that the *Eunuch* may not have Reaſon to ſay, *I am a dry Tree*, Iſa. lvi. 3. *For, behold the Lord will give*, even to ſuch, *a Place in his Houſe, and a Name better than of Sons and Daughters*. The Soul that is in Sincerity aiming at this Walk, and whoſe inward Deſires ſtirs after more of this Holy Spirit, he will not refuſe to ſuch that Name and Eſteem, that they dare not take to themſelves, becauſe of their ſeen and felt Unworthineſs. Now, *in this Verſe* he proceeds further, to the Fruits and Effects of Sin dwelling in us, to enlarge the Conſolation againſt that too. Now, *If Chriſt be in you, the Body*, &c. Seeing the Word of God hath made ſuch a Connection between Sin and Death, and Death is the Wages of Sin, and that which is the juſt Recompenſe of Enmity and Rebellion againſt God, the poor troubled Soul might be ready to conceive, that if the Body be adjudged to Death for Sin, that the reſt of the Wages ſhall be paid, and Sin having ſo much Dominion as to kill the Body, that it ſhould exerce its full power to deſtroy all; ſeeing we

have

have a visible Character of the Curse of God engraven on us in the Mortality of our Bodies; it may look with such a Visage on a Soul troubled for Sin, as if it were but Earnest of the full Curse and Weight of Wrath, and that Sin were not fully satisfied for, nor Justice fully contented by Christ's Ransom. Now, he opposes to this Misconception, the strongest Ground of Consolation, *If Christ be in you, though your Bodies must die for Sin*, because Sin dwelleth in them, yet that Spirit of Life that is in you, hath begun eternal Life in your Souls; your Spirits are not only immortal in Being, but that eternal happy Being is begun in you; the Seeds of it are cast into your Souls, and shall certainly grow up to Perfection of Holiness and Happiness, and this through the Righteousness of Christ, which assureth that State unto you: The Comfort is, it is neither total, for it is only the Death of your Body; nor is it perpetual, for your Bodies shall be raised again to Life eternal, *ver.* 11. And not only is it only in Part, and for a Season, but it is for a *blessed End* and Purpose, it is that Sin may be wholly cleansed out; that this Tabernacle is taken down, as the leprous Houses were to be taken down under the Law, and as now we use to cast down Pest-lodges, the better to cleanse them of the Infection: It is not to prejudge him of Life, but to instal him in a better Life. Thus you see that it is neither total nor perpetual, but it is medicinal and profitable to the Soul; it is but the Death of the Body for a Moment, and the Life of the Soul for ever.

SERMON XXVII.

Vers. 10. *And if Christ be in you, the Body is dead because of Sin*, &c.

THis is the high Excellency of the *Christian Religion*, that it contains the most absolute Precepts for an *holy Life*, and the greatest Comforts *in Death*: For from these Two, the Truth and Excellency of Religion is to be measured, if it have the highest and perfectest Rule of Walking, and the chiefest Comfort withal. Now, the Perfection of Christianity you saw in the Rule, how spiritual it is? How reasonable? How divine? How free from all corrupt Mixture? How transcending all the most exquisite Precepts and Laws of Men, deriving a holy Conversation from the highest Fountain, *the Spirit of Christ*, and conforming it to the highest Pattern, *the Will of God*. And indeed, in the first Word of this *ver.* there is something of the excellent Nature of Christianity holden out, *if Christ be in you*, which is the true Description of a Christian, one in whom Christ is, which imports

imports, *the divine Principle, and the ſpiritual Subject of Chriſtianity*. The Principle is Chriſt in a Man, Chriſt by his Spirit dwelling in him. This great Apoſtle knew this well in his own Experience, and therefore he can ſpeak beſt in this Stile, *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt in me*, Gal. ii. 20. importing, that Chriſt and his Spirit is to the Soul, what the Soul is to the Body: That there is a living Influence from Heaven, that acts and moves the Soul of a Chriſtian as powerfully, yet as ſweetly and pleaſantly as if it were the natural Motion of the Soul: And truly it is the natural Motion of the Soul, 'tis that primitive Life which was moſt connatural to the Soul of Man, which Sin did deprive us of: All the powerful Conſtraint and Violence that Chriſt uſes in drawing the Souls of Men to him, and after him, is as kindly unto them, and perfects them as much, as that Impulſe by which the Soul moves and turns the Body; a ſweet Compulſion and bleſſed Violence! Now this ſhould make Chriſtians often to reflect upon another Principle of their Life than themſelves, that by looking on him, *who is the Reſurrection and the Life, who is the true Vine*, and abiding in him by Faith, their Life may be continued and increaſed. It is certainly much Reflection on him, *who is All in All*; and leſs upon our ſelves, that maintains this Life: And therefore, the moſt Part of Men being wholly Strangers to this, whether in their Purpoſes or Practices, or judgings of both, unacquainted with any higher Look in Religion, than they uſe in their natural and civil Actings, it doth give Ground to aſſure us, that they are Strangers, alienated from the Life of God, *without God and without Chriſt in the World*.

But then, *the ſpiritual Subject of Chriſtianity* is here, Chriſt *in you*, not Chriſt *without you*, in Ordinances, in Profeſſion, in ſome civil Carriage; but Chriſt within the Heart of a Man that is *a Chriſtian*: It is the receiving of Chriſt into the Soul, and putting him on upon the inner Man, and renewing it, that makes a Chriſtian; not being externally cloathed with him, or compaſſed about with him in the Adminiſtration of the Ordinances: It fears me, moſt part of us who bear the Name of *Chriſtianity*, have no Character of it *within*, if we were looked and ſearched. Many are like the Sepulchres Chriſt ſpeaks of, *without* painted and fair, *within* nothing but Rottenneſs and dead Bones. What have many of you more of Chriſt, than what a blind Man hath of Light? It is round about him, but not *within* him. The Light hath ſhined in Darkneſs, but your Darkneſs cannot comprehend it: You are environed with the outward Appearances of Chriſt in his Word and Ordinances, and that is all; but neither *within* you, nor *upon* many of you, is there any Thing either of his Light or Life? Not ſo much as any outward Profeſſion or Behaviour, ſuitable to the Revelation of Chriſt about you: As if you were aſhamed to be Chriſtians, you maintain groſs Ignorance, and practiſe manifeſt Rebellion againſt his known Will, in the very Light of the Goſpel. How few have ſo much Tincture of Chriſt, ſo much as to colour the external Man, or to clothe it with any Blameleſſneſs of Walking, or Form of Religion? How few are ſo much as Chriſtians in the Letter? For you are not acquainted either with *Letter* or *Spirit*, either with Knowledge or Affection, or Practice. But ſuppoſe that ſome have put on Chriſt on their outward

ward Man, and colour over themſelves with ſome Performances of religious Duties, and ſmooth themſelves with Civility in Carriage; yet, alas! how few are they who are renewed in the Spirit of their Mind, and have put on Chriſt in their inward Man, who have opened the Secrets of their Hearts, and received him to *ly all Night between their Breaſts*? How few are buſied about their Hearts, to have any new Impreſſion and Dye upon their Affections, to mould them after a new Manner, to kill the Love of this World, and the Luſts of it, and caſt out the Rottenneſs and Superfluity of Naughtineſs which abides within? But ſome there are, who are perſuaded thus to do, to give up their Spirits to Religion, and all their Buſineſs and Care is, *to have Chriſt within, as well as without*. Now, if the reſt of you will not be perſuaded to be of this Number, conſider what you prejudge your ſelves of, of all the Comfort of Religion; and then Religion is no Religion, and to no Purpoſe, if you have no Benefit by it. And certainly, except Chriſt be in you, as a King to rule you, and a Prophet to teach you, to ſubdue your Luſts, and to diſpel your Darkneſs, when he appears, he cannot appear to your Comfort and Salvation. You are deprived of this great Cordial againſt Death, and Death muſt ſeize upon all that is within you, Soul and Body, ſince Chriſt the Spirit of Life is not within you. Happineſs without you, will not make you happy: Salvation round about you will not ſave you. If you would be ſaved, there muſt be a near and immediate Union with Happineſs, *Chriſt in the Heart*, and Salvation cometh with him. A Chriſtian is not only *Chriſt without*, not imputing his Sins to him, clothing him with his Righteouſneſs; but *Chriſt within* too, cleanſing the Heart from the Love of Sin, *perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God*. Do not think you have any Share in Chriſt *without you*, except you receive Chriſt *within yon*; becauſe Chriſt is one *within* and *without*, and his Gifts are undivided. Therefore true Faith receives *whole Chriſt*, as a compleat Saviour; even as he is entirely offered, ſo he is undividedly received: As he is *without* ſaving us, and *within* ſanctifying us, Chriſt *without*, delivering from Wrath, and *Chriſt within*, redeeming from all Iniquity, theſe cannot be parted, more than his Coat that had no Seam. It is a heavy and weighty Word of this Apoſtle's, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5. *Examine your ſelves, whether you be in the Faith: Know you not your ſelves, that Chriſt is in you, except you be reprobates?* I wiſh you would lay it to Heart, who have never yet returned to your Hearts: *If Chriſt be not formed in you*, as *Gal.* iv. 19. you are as yet among the Refuſe, Droſs, and that which muſt be burnt with Fire: You cannot but be caſt away *in the Day when he makes up his Jewels*. Where Chriſt is, he is *the Hope of Glory*, he is an immortal Seed of Glory. How can you hope for Chriſt, who have nothing of him *within you*?

Now, the other Touch-ſtone of true Religion, is, *the great Comfort it furniſhes to the Soul*: And of all Comforts the greateſt is that, which is a Cordial to the Heart, againſt the greateſt Fears and Evils. Now, certainly the Matter of greateſt Fear is *Death*, not ſo much becauſe of itſelf, but chiefly becauſe of that Eternity of unchangeable Miſery, that naturally it tranſmits them unto. Now, it is only *Chriſtian Religion* poſſeſſing the Heart, that arms a Man compleatly againſt the Fear either of Death itſelf, or

the Conſequents of it: It giveth the moſt powerful Conſolation, that not only overcometh the Bitterneſs, and taketh out the Sting of Death, but changeth the Nature of it ſo far, as to make it the Matter of Triumph and Gloriation.

There is ſomething here ſuppoſed, *the worſt that can befal a Chriſtian, it is the Death of a Part of him*, and that the worſt and ignobleſt Part only, *the Body is dead becauſe of Sin.* Then, that which is oppoſed by Way of Comfort to counterballance it, is, *the Life of his better and more noble Part.* And beſides we have the Fountains both of that Death and this Life, *Mans Sin* the Cauſe of bodily Death, *Chriſt's Righteouſneſs* the Fountain of ſpiritual Life.

Of Death many have had ſweet Meditations, even among theſe that the Light of the World hath not ſhined upon: And indeed they may make us aſhamed who profeſs *Chriſtianity*, and ſo the Hope of the Reſurrection from the Dead, that they have accounted it only true Wiſdom and ſound Philoſophy, *to meditate often on Death*; and made it the very principal Point of living well, to be always learning to die; and have applied their whole Studies that Way, neglecting preſent Things that are in the by, have given themſelves to ſearch out ſome Comfort againſt Death, or from Death. Yea, ſome have ſo profited in this, that they have accounted Death the greateſt Good that can befal Man, and perſuaded others to think ſo. Now, what may we think of our ſelves, who ſcarce apprehend *Mortality*, eſpecially conſidering that we have the true Fountain of it revealed to us, and the true Nature and Conſequents of it.

All Men muſt needs know, that *Death* is the moſt univerſal King in the World, that it reigns over all Ages, Sexes, Conditions, Nations and Times: Though few be willing to entertain Thoughts of it; yet ſooner or later they muſt be conſtrained to give it lodging upon their Eye-lids, and ſuffer it to ſtorm the very ſtrongeſt Tower, *the Heart*, and batter it down, and break the Strings of it, having no Way either to fly from it, or reſiſt it. Now, the Conſideration of the general Inundation of Death over all Mankind, and the certain approaching of it to every particular Man's Door, hath made many ſerious Thoughts among the wiſe Men of the World. But being deſtitute of this heavenly Light that ſhineth to us, they could not attain to the Original of it; but have conceived that it was a common Tribute of Nature, and an univerſal Law impoſed upon all Mankind by Nature, having the ſame Reaſon, that other Mutations and Changes among the Creatures here below have; and ſo have thought it no more ſtrange Thing, than to ſee other Things diſſolved in their Elements. Now indeed, ſeeing they could apprehend no other bitter Ingredient in it, it was no wonder that the wiſeſt of them could not fear it, but rather wait and expect it as a Reſt from their Labours, as the End of all their Miſeries.

But the Lord hath revealed unto us in his Word, the true Cauſe of it, and ſo the true Nature of it. The true *Cauſe* of it is *Sin, Sin entred into the World, and Death paſt upon all, for that all have ſinned*, Rom. v. 12. Man was created for another Purpoſe, and upon other Conditions, and a Law of perpetual Life and eternal Happineſs was paſt in his Favours, he abiding in the Favour and obeying the Will of him that gave him Life and Being. Now, *Sin* interpoſing, and ſeparating between Man and God, looſing that bleſſed Knot of Union

Union and Communion, it was this other Law that ſucceeded, as a ſuitable Recompence, *thou ſhalt die*: It is reſolved in the Council of Heaven, that the Union of Man ſhall be diſſolved, his Soul and Body ſeparated, in juſt Recompence of the breaking the Bond of Union with God. This is it that hath opened the Sluice, to let in an Inundation of Miſery on Mankind: This was the juſt Occaſion of that righteous but terrible Appointment, *It is appointed that all Men once ſhould die, and after Death come to Judgment*, Heb. ix. 27. That ſince the Body had inticed the Soul, and ſuggeſted unto it ſuch unnatural and rebellious Motions of withdrawing from the bleſſed Fountain of Life, to ſatisfy its Pleaſure, the Body ſhould be under a Sentence of Deprivement and Forfeiture of that great Benefit and Privilege of Life it had by the Soul's indwelling, and condemned to return to its firſt baſe Original, *the Duſt*, and to be made a Feaſt of Worms, to lodge in the Grave, and be a ſubject of the greateſt Corruption and Rottenneſs, becauſe it became the Inſtrument, yea, the Incitement of the Soul to Sin againſt that God that had from Heaven breathed a Spirit into it, and exalted it above all the Duſt or Clay in the World. Now, my Beloved, do we not get many Remembrances of our Sins? Is not every Day preſenting our primitive Departure from God, our firſt Separation from the Fountain of Life by Sin, to our View, and in ſuch ſad and woful Effects pointing out the Hainouſneſs of Sin? Do you not ſee Mens Bodies every Day diſſolved, the Tabernacle of Earth taken down, and the Soul conſtrained to remove out of it? But what Influence hath it upon us, what do the multiplied Funerals work upon us? It may be, Sorrow for our Friends, but little or no Apprehenſion of our own Mortality, and baſe Impreſſion of Sin, that ſeparates our Souls from God. Who is made ſadly to reflect upon his Original, or to mind ſeriouſly that Statute and Appointment of Heaven, *in that Day thou ſhalt die?* It is ſtrange that all of us fear *Death*, and few are afraid of *Sin*, that carries Death in its Boſom. That we are ſo unwilling to reap Corruption in our Bodies, and yet we are ſo earneſt and laborious in ſowing to the Fleſh. Be not deceived, for you are daily reaping what you have ſown. And, O! that it were all the Harveſt; but *Death* is only the putting in of the Sickle of Vengeance, the firſt cut of it: But O! to think on what follows, would certainly reſtrain Men, and cool them in their fervent Purſuits after Sin.

SERMON XXVII.

Verſ. 10. *And if Chriſt be in you, the Body is dead becauſe of Sin: But the Spirit is Life becauſe of Righteouſneſs.*

THE Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law, ſaith our Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* xv. 56. Theſe two concur to make Man mortal, and theſe two are the bitter Ingredients of Death. *Sin* procured it, and the *Law* appointed it: And God hath ſeen to the exact Execution of that Law in all Ages; for *what Man liveth and ſhall not taſte of Death?* Two only eſcaped the common Lot, *Enoch* and *Elias*; for *they pleaſed God, and God took them:* And beſides, it was for a Pledge, that at the laſt Day all ſhall not die, but be changed. The true Cauſe of Death is *Sin*, and the true Nature of it is *penal*, to be a Puniſhment of Sin: Take away this Relation to *Sin*, and *Death* wants the Sting. But in its firſt Appointment, and as it prevails generally over Men, *aculeata eſt mors*, it hath a Sting that pierceth deeper, and woundeth ſorer than to the Deſolation of the Body, it goeth in to the innermoſt Parts of the Soul, and woundeth that eternally. The Truth is, the *Death* of the Body is not either the *firſt Death*, or the *laſt Death*: It is rather placed in the middle between two Deaths; and 'tis the Fruit of the *firſt*, and the Root of the laſt. There is a Death immediately hath enſued upon Sin, and it is the Separation of the Soul from God, the Fountain of Life and Bleſſedneſs: And this is the Death often ſpoken of, *you who were dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes*, &c. *Eph.* ii. 1. *Being paſt Feeling, and alienated from the Life of God*, Eph. iv. 18, 19. And truly this is worſe in itſelf than the Death of the Body ſimply, though not ſo ſenſible, becauſe ſpiritual: The Corruption of the beſt Part in Man, in all Reaſon is worſe than the Corruption of his worſt Part: But this Death, which conſiſts eſpecially in the Loſs of that bleſſed Communion with God, which made the Soul happy, cannot be found till ſome new Life enter, or elſe till the laſt Death come, which adds infinite Pain to infinite Loſs. Now the Death of the Body ſucceeds this Soul's Death, and that is, the Separation of the Soul from the Body, moſt ſuitable, ſeeing the Soul was turned from the Fountain-ſpirit to the Body, that the Body ſhould by his Command return to Duſt, and be made the moſt defiled Piece of Duſt. Now, this were not ſo grievous, if it were not a Step to the Death to come, and a Degree of it introductive to it. But that Statute and Appointment of Heaven hath thus linked it, *after Death comes Judgment*: Becauſe, the Soul in the Body would not be ſenſible of its Separation from God, but was wholly taken up with the Body, neglecting and miskenning that infinite

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Loſs of God's Favour and Face, therefore the Lord commands it to go out of the Body, that it may then be ſenſible of its infinite Loſs of God, when it is ſeparated from the Body; that it may then have Leiſure to reflect upon itſelf, and find its own ſurpaſſing Miſery: And then indeed infinite Pain and infinite Loſs conjoined eternal Baniſhment from the Preſence of that bleſſed Spirit, and eternal Torment within itſelf: Theſe two concurring, what Poſture do you think ſuch a Soul will be into? There are ſome *Earneſt* of this in this Life, when God reveals his Terror, *and ſets Mens Sins in order before their Face.* O! how intolerable is it, and more inſupportable than many Deaths? They that have been acquainted with it, have declared it, *the Terrors of God are like poiſonable Arrows ſunk into* Job's *Spirit, and drinking up all the Moiſture of them.* Such a Spirit as is wounded with one of theſe Darts ſhot from Heaven, *who can bear it?* Not the moſt patient and moſt magnanimous Spirit, *that can ſuſtain all other Infirmities*, Prov. xviii. 14. Now, my beloved, if it be ſo now, while the Soul is in the Body, drowned in it, what will be the Caſe of the Soul ſeparated from the Body, when it ſhall be all *one Senſe*, to reflect and conſider itſelf.

This is the Sting of Death indeed, worſe than a Thouſand Deaths, to a Soul that apprehends it; and the leſs it is apprehended, the worſe it is; becauſe it is the more certain, and muſt ſhortly be found, when there is no brazen Serpent to heal that Sting. Now, what Comfort have you provided againſt this Day? What Way do you think to take out this Sting? Truly, there is no Balm for it, no Phyſician for it, but one; and that the *Chriſtian* is only acquainted with: *He in whom Chriſt is*, he hath this ſovereign Antidote againſt the Poiſon of Death, he hath the very Sting of it taken out by Chriſt, Death itſelf killed, and of an mortal Enemy made the kindeſt Friend. And ſo he may triumph with the Apoſtle, *O Death, where is thy Sting, O Grave, where is thy Victory! Thanks be to God in Jeſus Chriſt, who giveth us the Victory*, 1 Cor. xv. 55. The Ground of his Triumph, and that which a Chriſtian hath to oppoſe to all the Sorrows and Pains and Fears of Death muſtred againſt him, is threefold, *one*, that Death is *not real*, a *ſecond*, that it is *not total*, even that which is, *and then* that it is *not perpetual.* This laſt is contained in the next *ver.* the ſecond expreſſed in this *ver.* and the firſt may be underſtoodor implied in it. That the Nature of Death is ſo far changed, that of a Puniſhment it is become a Medicine, of a Puniſhment for Sin it is turned into the laſt Purgative of the Soul from Sin; and thus the Sting of it is taken away, that Relation it did bear to the juſt Wrath of God. And now the Body of a Chriſtian under Appointment to die for Sin, that is, for the Death of Sin, the eternal Death of Sin. Chriſt having come under the Power of Death, hath gotten Power over it, and ſpoiled it of its ſtinging Vertue, he hath taken away the poiſonable Ingredient of the Curſe, that it can no more hurt them that are in him, and ſo it is not now veſted with that piercing and wounding Notion of Puniſhment: Though it be true that Sin was the firſt In-let of Death, that it firſt opened the Sluice to let it enter and flow in upon Mankind; yet that Appointment of Death is renewed, and bears a Relation to the Deſtruction of Sin, rather than the Puniſhment of the Sinner, who is forgiven in Chriſt: And, O! how much ſolid Comfort is here,

that

that the great Reaſon of *Mortality* that a Chriſtian is ſubject unto, is that he may be made free of that which made him at firſt Mortal. Becauſe Sin hath taken ſuch Poſſeſſion in this earthly Tabernacle, and is ſo ſtrong a Poiſon, that it hath infected all the Members, and by no Purgation here made can be fully cleanſed out, but there are many ſecret Corners it lurks into, and upon occaſion vents itſelf: Therefore it hath pleaſed God in his infinite Goodneſs, to continue the former Appointment of Death, but under a new and living Conſideration, to take down this infected and defiled Tabernacle, as the Houſes of Leproſie were taken down under the Law, that ſo they might be the better cleanſed, and this is the laſt Purification of the Soul from Sin. And therefore, as one of the Ancients ſaid well, *That we might not be eternally miſerable, Mercy hath made us mortal.* Juſtice hath made the World mortal, that they may be eternally miſerable; but to put an End to this Miſery, Chriſt hath continued our Mortality. Elſe he would have aboliſhed Death itſelf, if he had not meant to aboliſh Sin by Death; and indeed it would appear this is the Reaſon why the World muſt be conſumed with Fire at the laſt Day, and new Heavens and Earth ſucceed in its Room; becauſe, as the little Houſe, the *Body*, ſo the great Houſe, the *World*, was infected with this Leproſie, and ſo ſubjoined to Vanity and Corruption becauſe of Man's Sin: Therefore that there might be no Remnant of Man's Corruption, and no Memorial of Sin to interrupt his eternal Joy, the Lord will purify and change all: All the Members that were made Inſtruments of Unrighteouſneſs, all the Creatures that were Servants to Man's Luſts, a new Form and Faſhion ſhall be put on all, that the *Body* being reſtored, may be a fit dwelling Place for the purified Soul; and the *World* renewed, may be a fit Houſe for righteous Men. Thus you ſee, that Death to a Chriſtian is not real Death; for it is not the Death of a Chriſtian, but the *Death of Sin* his greateſt Enemy, it is not a Puniſhment, but the Enlargement of the Soul.

Now, the next Comfort is that which is but *partial*, it is but the Diſſolution of the loweſt Part in Man, his *Body*; ſo far from prejudging the immortal Life of his Spirit, that it is rather the Accompliſhment of that. Though the Body muſt die, yet eternal Life is begun already within the Soul, for the Spirit of Chriſt hath brought in Life; the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt hath purchaſed it, and the Spirit hath performed it, and applied it to us: Not only there is an *immortal Being* in a Chriſtian, that muſt ſurvive the Duſt (for that is common to all Men) but there is a *new Life* begun in him, an *immortal Well-being* in Joy and Happineſs, which only deſerves the Name of *Life*, that cometh never to its full Perfection, till the bodily and earthly Houſe be taken down. If you conſider ſeriouſly what a *new Life* a Chriſtian is tranſlated unto, by the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt, and the Miniſtration of the Word, it is then moſt active and lively, when the Soul is moſt retired from the Body in Meditation: The *new Life* of a Chriſtian, is moſt perfect in this Life, when it carrieth him the furtheſt Diſtance from his bodily Senſes, and is moſt abſtracted from all ſenſible Engagements, as you heard; for indeed it reſtores the Spirit of a Man to its native Rule and Dominion over the Body, ſo that it is then moſt perfect, when it is moſt gathered within it ſelf, and diſingaged from all external Intanglements.

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Now, certain it is, since the Perfection of the Soul in this Life, consists in such a Retirement from the Body, that when it is wholly separated from it, then it is in the most absolute State of Perfection; and its Life acts most purely and perfectly, when it hath no Body to communicate with, and to entangle it either with its Lusts or Necessities. The *Spirit is Life*, it hath a Life now which is then best when furthest from the Body; and therefore it cannot but be surpassing better when it is out of the Body; and all this is purchased by Christ's Righteousness. As Man's Obedience made an End of his Life, Christ's Disobedience hath made our Life endless: He suffered Death to sting him, and by this hath taken the Sting from it: And now, there is a new Statute and Appointment of Heaven published in the Gospel, *whosever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal Life*. Now indeed, this hath so entirely changed the Nature of *Death*, that it hath now the most lovely and desirable Aspect on a Christian, that it is no more an Object of Fear, but of Desire, amicable, not terrible unto him. Since there is no Way to save the Passenger, but to let the Vessel break, he will be content to have the Body splitted, that himself, that is his Soul, may escape; for truly a Man's Soul is himself, the Body is but an earthly Tabernacle that must be taken down, to let the Inhabitant win out to come near his Lord. The Body is the Prison-house that he groans to have opened, that he may enjoy that Liberty of the Sons of God. And now to a Christian, *Death* is not properly an Object of Patience, but of Desire rather, *I desire to be dissolved and be with Christ*, Phil. i 23. He that hath but advanced little in Christianity will be content to die: But because there is too much Flesh, he will *desire* to live; but a Christian that is riper in Knowledge and Grace, will rather *desire* to die, and only be *content* to live: He will exercise Patience and Submission about abiding here; but Groanings and Pantings about removing hence, because he knoweth that there is no Choice between that *Bondage* and this *Liberty*.

SERMON XXIX.

Verse 10. *And if Christ be in you, the Body is dead because of Sin: But the Spirit is Life, because of Righteousness.*

IT was the first curse and threatning, wherein God thought fit to comprehend all Misery, *Thou shalt die the Death in that Day thou eatest:* Though the Sentence was not presently executed according to the Letter, yet from that Day forward Man was made mortal; and there seemeth to be much Mercy and Goodness of God interveening to plead a delay of Death it self, that so the Promise of Life

Life in the *ſecond Adam* might come to the *firſt* and his Poſterity, and they might be delivered from the *ſecond Death*, though not from the *firſt*. Always we bear about the Marks of Sin in our Bodies to this Day, and in ſo far the Threatning taketh Place, that this Life that we live in the Body, is become nothing elſe but a *dying Life*: The Life that the Ungodly ſhall live out of the Body is a *living Death*; and either of theſe is worſe than ſimple Death or Deſtruction of Being. The ſerious Contemplation of the Miſeries of this Life, made *wiſe Solomon* to praiſe the Dead more than the Living, contrary to the Cuſtom of Men, who rejoice at the Birth of a Man-child, and mourn at their Death. Yea, it preſſed him further, to think them which have not at all been, better than both; becauſe they have not ſeen the Evil under the Sun: This World is ſuch a *Chaos*, ſuch a Maſs of Miſeries, that if Men underſtood it before they came into it, they would be far more loath to enter into it, than they are now afraid to go out of it. And truly we want not Remembrances and Repreſentations of our Miſery every Day, in that Children come *weeping* into the World, as it were bewailing their own Misfortune, that they were brought forth to be ſenſible Subjects of Miſery. And what is all our Lifetime, but a Repetition of Sighs and Groans, Anxiety and Satiety, loathing and longing, dividing our Spirits and our Time between them? How many Deaths muſt we ſuffer, before Death come? For the Abſence or Loſs of any Thing much deſired, is a Separation no leſs grievous to the Hearts of Men, than the parting of Soul and Body: For Affection to temporal periſhing Things, unites the Soul ſo unto them, that there is no parting without Pain, no Diſſolution of that Continuity without much Vexation; and yet the Soul muſt ſuffer many ſuch Tortures in one Day, becauſe the Things are periſhing in their own Nature, and uncertain. What is Sleep, which devours the moſt Part of our Time? But the very Image and Picture of Death, a viſible and daily Repreſentation of the long Ceſſation of the ſenſitive Life in the Grave; and yet truly it is the beſt and moſt innocent Part of our Time, though we accuſe it often: There is both leſs *Sin*, and leſs *Miſery* in it; for it is almoſt the only Leniament and Refreſhment we get in all our Miſeries. *Job* ſought it to aſſwage his Grief, and eaſe his Body: But it was the Extremity of his Miſery, that he could not find it. Now, my Beloved, when you find that which is called *Life*, ſubject to ſo much Miſery, that you are conſtrained often to deſire you had never been born; you find it a Valley of Tears, a Houſe of Mourning, from whence all true Delight and ſolid Happineſs is baniſhed: Seeing the very Officers and Serjeants of Death are continually ſurrounding us, and walk alongſt with us, though unpleaſant Company, in our greateſt Contentments, and are putting Marks upon your Doors, as in the Time of the Plague upon Houſes infected, *Lord have Mercy upon us*, and are continually bearing this *Motto* to our View, and ſounding this Direction to our Ears, *cito, procul, diu, to get ſoon out of Sodom*, that is appointed for Deſtruction, to fly quickly out of our ſelves, to the Refuge appointed of God, even one that *was dead and is alive, and hath redeemed us by his Blood*; and to get far off from our ſelves, and take up dwelling in the bleſſed Son of God, through whoſe Fleſh there is Acceſs to the Father; ſeeing all theſe (I ſay) are ſo, why do not

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we awake our ſelves upon the Sound of the Promiſe of Immortality and Life, brought to our Ears in the Goſpel? Mortality hath already ſeized upon our Bodies, but why do you not catch hold of this Opportunity of releaſing your Souls from the Chains and Fetters of eternal Death? Truly, my Beloved, all that can be ſpoken of Torments and Miſeries in this Life, ſuppoſe we could imagine all the exquiſite Torments invented by the moſt cruel Tyrants ſince the Beginning, to be combined in ſome one Kind of Torture, and would then ſtretch our Imagination beyond that, as far as that which is compoſed of all Torments, ſurpaſſeth the ſimpleſt Death; yet we do not conceive nor expreſs unto you that Death to come. Believe it, when the Soul is out of the Body, it is a *moſt pure Activity*, all Senſe, all Knowledge: And ſeeing where it is dulled and dampiſhed in the Body, it is capable of ſo much Grief or Joy, Pleaſure or Pain, we may conclude, that being looſed from theſe ſtupifying earthly Chains, that it is capable of infinite more Vexation, or Contentation, in a higher or purer Strain.

Therefore, we may conclude with the *Apoſtle*, that all Men by Nature are miſerable in *Life*, but infinitely more miſerable in Death; only the Man who is in Jeſus Chriſt, in whoſe *Spirit* Chriſt dwells, and hath made a Temple of his *Body*, for offering up reaſonable Service in it, that Man only is happy in *Life*, but far happier in *Death*: Happy that he was born, but infinitely more happy that he was born mortal, born to die; for *if the Body be dead becauſe of Sin, the Spirit is Life becauſe of Righteouſneſs*. Men commonly make their Accounts, and calculate their Time ſo, as if *Death* were the End of it: Truly, it were Happineſs in the Generality of Men, that that Computation were true, either that it had never begun, or that it might end here; for that which is the greateſt Dignity and Glory of a Man, his *immortal Soul*, it is truly the greateſt Miſery of ſinful Men, becauſe it capacitates them for eternal Miſery. But if we make our Accounts right, and take the right Period, truly *Death* is but the Beginning of our Time, of endleſs and unchangeable Endurance either in Happineſs or Miſery: And this Life in the Body, which is only in the View of the ſhort-ſighted Sons of Men, is but a ſtrait and narrow Paſſage into the infinite Ocean of Eternity; but ſo inconſiderable it is, that according as the Spirit in this Paſſage is faſhioned and formed, ſo it muſt continue for ever; *for where the Tree falleth, there it lieth.* There may be Hope that a Tree will ſprout again, but truly there is no Hope, that ever the damned Soul ſhall ſee a Spring of Joy; and no Fear that ever the bleſſed Spirits ſhall find a Winter of Grief, ſuch is the Evenneſs of Eternity, that there is no Shadow of Change in it.

O then, how happy are they in whoſe Souls this Life is already begun, which ſhall then come to its Meridian, when the Glory of the Fleſh falls down like withered Hay into the Duſt: The *Life* as well as the Light of the righteous is progreſſive, 'tis ſhining more and more till that Day come, the Day of Death, only worthy to be called the preſent Day, becauſe it brings Perfection, it mounts the Soul in the higheſt Point of the Orb, and there is no declining from that again. The Spirit is now alive in ſome holy Affections and Motions, breathing upwards, wreſtling towards that Point: The Soul is now in Part united to the Fountain of Life, by loving Attendance and Obedience, and it

is longing to be more closely united: The inward Senses are exercised about spiritual Things, but the Burden of this clayie Mansion doth much dull and damp them, and proves a great *Remora* to the Spirit: The Body indispose and weakens the Soul much: 'Tis Life, as in an *Infant*, though a reasonable Soul be there, yet overwhelmed with the Incapacity of the Organs, this Body is truly a *Prison* of Restraint and Confinement to the Soul, and often lothsome and ugly through the Filthiness of Sin: But when the Spirit is delivered from this necessary Burden and Impediment, O! how lively is that Life it then lives; then the Life, Peace, Joy, Love and Delight of the Soul, surmounts all that is possible here, further than the highest Exercise of the Soul of the wisest Men surpasses the brutish-like Apprehensions of an Infant: And indeed then, the Christian comes to his full Stature, and is a *perfect Man*, when he ceaseth to be a Man.

How will you not be perswaded, Beloved in the Lord, to long after this Life, to have Christ formed in your Hearts; for truly the Generality have not so much as Christ fashioned in their *outward Habit*, but are *within* Darkness and Earthiness, and Wickedness, and *without* Impiety and Profanity! Will you not long for this Life? for now *you are dead while you live*, as the Apostle speaks of Widows that live in Pleasure: The more the the Soul be satisfied with earthly Things, it is the deeper buried in the Grave of the Flesh, and the further separated from God: Alas! many of you know no other Life, than that which you now live in the Body, you neither apprehend what this new Birth is, nor what the perfect Stature of it shall be afterwards; but truly while it is thus, you are but *walking Shadows*, *breathing Clay*, and no more. A godly Man used to calculate the Years of his Nativity from his second Birth, his Conversion to God in Christ: And truly, this is the true Period of the right Calculation of Life, of that Life which shall not see Death. True Life hath but one Period, that is, *the Beginning* of it; for *End* it hath none: I beseech you reckon your Years thus, and I fear that you reckon your selves, many of you, yet *dead in Sins and Trespasses*. Is that Life, I pray you, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to play, to walk, to work? Is there any Thing in all these worthy of a reasonable Soul, which must survive the Body, and so cease from such Things for ever? Think within your selves, do you live any other Life than this? What is your Life, but a tedious and wearisome Repetition of such brutish Actions, which are only terminate on the Body? O! then how miserable are you, if you have no other Period to reckon from, than your Birth-day? If there be not a second Birth-day before your Burial, you may make your Reckoning to be banished eternally from the Life of God.

As for you, *Christians*, whom God hath quickned by the Spirit of his Son, be much in the Exercise of this *Life*, and that will maintain and advance it: Let your Care be about your Spirits, and to hearten you in this Study, and to beget in you the Hope of eternal Life, look much, and lay fast hold on that *Life-giving Saviour*, who by his righteous *Life*, and accursed *Death*, hath purchased by his own Blood, both Happiness to us and Holiness: Consider what Debters you are to him, who loved not his own *Life*, and spared it not to purchase this *Life* to us. Let our Thoughts and Affections be occupied about this high Purchase of our

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Saviour's, which is freely bestowed on them that will have it, and believe in him for it: If we be not satisfied with such a low and wretched *Life*, as is in the Body, he will give a higher and more enduring *Life*, and only worthy of that Name.

SERMON XXX.

Verſ. 11. *But if the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead dwell in you: He that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal Bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

IT is true, the Soul is incomparably better than the Body; and he is only worthy the Name of a *Man*, and of a *Chriſtian*, who prefers this more excellent Part, and imploys his Study and Time about it, and regards his Body only for the noble Gueſt that lodges within it; and therefore it is one of the prime Conſolations that *Chriſtianity* affords, that it provides chiefly for the happy Eſtate of this immortal Piece in Man; which truly were alone ſufficient to draw our Souls wholly after Religion, ſuppoſe the Body ſhould never taſte of the Fruits of it, but die, and riſe no more, and never be awak'd out of its Sleep; yet it were a ſufficient Ground of Engagement to Godlineſs, that the Life and Well-being of the far better Part in Man, is ſecured for Eternity, which is infinitely more than all Things beſide can truly promiſe us, or be able to perform. Certainly, whatſoever elſe you give your Hearts to, and ſpend your Time upon, it either will leave you in the midſt of your Days, and at your End you ſhall be a Fool; or you muſt leave it in the End of your Days, and find your ſelves as much diſappointed; or, to ſpeak more properly, becauſe when your Time is ending, your Life and Being is but at its Beginning, you muſt bid an *eternal adieu* to all theſe Things whereupon your Hearts are ſet when you are but Beginning truly to be. But this is only the proper and true Good of the Soul, *Chriſt in it*, moſt *portable*, and eaſily carried about with you; yea, that which makes the Soul no Burden to itſelf, and helps it to carry all Things eaſily; and then moſt *inſeparable*, for Chriſt in the Soul is the Spring of a never-ending Life, of Peace, Joy and Contentation in the Fountain of an infinite Goodneſs, and it ou.-wears Time and Age, as well as the immortal Being of the Soul: Yea, ſuch is the Strength of this Conſolation, that then the Soul is moſt cloſly united, and fully poſſeſſed of that which is its peculiar and ſatisfying Good, when it leaves the Body in the Duſt, and

eſcapes out of this Priſon, unto that glorious Liberty.

But yet there is beſides this an additional Comfort comprehended in the *Ver.* read, that the Sleep of the Body is not perpetual, that it ſhall once be awakned and raiſed up to the Fellowſhip of this Glory: For though a Man ſhould be abundantly ſatisfyed if he poſſeſs his own Soul, yet *no Man hateth his own Fleſh*; the Soul hath ſome Kind of natural Inclination to a Body ſuitable unto it, and in this it differs from an Angel; and therefore the Apoſtle, when he expreſſeth his earneſt Groan for the intimate Preſence of his Soul with Chriſt, he ſubjoins this Correction, *not that we deſire to be unclothed, but clothed upon it*, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 3. If it were poſſible, ſays he, we would be glad to have the Society of the Body in this Glory, we would not deſire to caſt off thoſe Cloths of Fleſh, but rather that the Garment of Glory might be ſpread over all, if it were not needful, becauſe they are old and ragged, and would not ſuit well; and our earthly Tabernacle is ruinous, and would not be fit for ſuch a glorious Gueſt to dwell into; and therefore it is needful to be taken down: Well then, here is an *Overplus*, and, as it were, a Surcharge of Conſolation, that ſeeing for the preſent it is expedient to put off the preſent Clothing of Fleſh, and take down the preſent earthly Houſe; yet that the Day is coming that the ſame Cloths renewed, ſhall be put on, and the ſame Houſe repaired and made ſuitable to Heaven, ſhall be built up; that this mortal Body ſhall be quickned with that ſame Spirit that now quickens the Soul, and makes it live out of the Body; and ſo the ſweet and beloved Friends, who parted with ſo much Pain and Grief, ſhall meet again with ſo much Pleaſure and Joy; and as they were Sharers together in the Miſeries of this Life, ſhall participate alſo in the Bleſſedneſs of the next, like *Saul* and *Jonathan, lovely and pleaſant in their Lives*, and though for a Time ſeparated in Death, yet *not* always *divided*. Now is the higheſt Top of Happineſs, to which nothing can be added; 'tis comprehenſive of the whole Man, and 'tis comprehenſive of all that can be imagined to be the *perfective* Good of Man.

It is no wonder then, that the Apoſtle reckon this Doctrine of the Reſurrection amongſt the *Foundations of Chriſtianity*, Heb. vi. 1, 2. for truly theſe two, the *Immortality of the Soul*, and the *Reſurrection of the mortal Body*, are the two Ground-ſtones, or Pillars of true Religion, which if they be not well ſettled in the Hearts of Men, all Religion is tottering and ruinous, and unable to ſupport it ſelf. That the Soul cannot taſte Death, or ſee Corruption, and that the Body ſhall but *taſte* it, and as it were *ſalute* it, and cannot always abide under the Power of it, theſe are the prime Foundations upon which all Chriſtian Perſuaſion is built; for without theſe be laid down in the loweſt and deepeſt Part of the Heart, all Exhortations to an holy and righteous Life are weak and ineffectual, all Conſolations are empty and vain; in a word, Religion is but an airy Speculation, that hath no Conſiſtence but in the Imaginations of Men; it is an Houſe upon Sand, that can abide no Blaſt of Temptation, no Wave of Miſery, but muſt ſtraight way fall to the Ground. From whence is it, I pray you, that the Perſuaſions of the Goſpel have ſo little Power upon Men, that the plain and plentiful Publication of a Saviour is of ſo ſmall Virtue, to ſtir up the Hearts of Men to take hold on him? How comes it to paſs that the Precepts and

and Prohibitions of the moſt high God, coming forth under his Authority, lays ſo little Reſtraint on Mens Corruptions? That ſo few will be perſuaded to ſtop their Courſe, and come off the Ways they are accuſtomed to? That Men pull away the Shoulder and ſtop the Ear, and make their Hearts as Adamant, incapable of being affected with either the Authority or Love of the Goſpel? That when he pipes unto us, ſo few dance, and when he mourns, ſo few laments? Is it not becauſe *theſe two Foundations* are not laid, and Mens Hearts not digged deep by earneſt Conſideration, to receive theſe Groundſtones of *Chriſtianity*, *the Belief of their Souls eternal Survivance after the Duſt*, and of *the Revivance and Reſurrection of the Body, after it hath ſlept a while in the Duſt*. I remember, *Heathens* have had ſome noble and rare Conceptions about Virtue, and ſome have laboured to enamour Men with the native Beauty of it, and to perſuade them that it was *a ſufficient Reward to itſelf*; and truly it would far more become a *Chriſtian*, who knoweth the high and divine Pattern of Holineſs, to be *God himſelf*, and ſo muſt needs behold a far ſurpaſſing Beauty and Excellency in the Image of God, than in all earthly Things; I ſay it will become him to accuſtom himſelf to a dutiful Obſervance of Religion, even without all reſpect to the Reward of it; he would train his Heart to do Homage to God, out of a loyal Affection and Reſpect to his *Majeſty*, and from the Love of the very intrinſick Beauty of Obedience, without borrowing always from ſuch ſelfiſh Conſiderations of our own *Happineſs* or *Miſery*. Notwithſtanding, ſuch is the Poſture of Man's Spirit now, that he cannot at all be engaged to the Love of Religion, except ſome *ſeen Advantage* conciliate it; and therefore the Lord makes uſe of ſuch ſelfiſh Principles in drawing Men to himſelf, and keeping them ſtill with him: And truly, conſidering Man's Infirmity, this is the Spirit and Life of all Religion, *Immortality* and *Reſurrection*, that which gives a Luſtre to all, and quickens all, that which makes all to ſink deep, and that which makes a Chriſtian ſtedfaſt and immoveable, 2 *Cor.* v. 8. It is certainly Hope that is the Key of the Heart, that opens and ſhuts it to any Thing. There the Apoſtle *Peter*, 1 *Epiſtle* 1. bleſſeth God heartily for the new Birth, and in the expreſſing of it, makes Hope the very Term of that Generation, and ſo it muſt be a ſubſtantial Thing. *Bleſſed be God, who hath begotten us again to a lively Hope*: Hope hath a quickning Power in it, it makes all new where it comes, and is full of Spirit; it is the Helmet and Anchor of a Chriſtian, that which bears the Dint of Temptation, and makes him ſteady in Religion: No Man will put in his Plough in this Ground, or ſow unto the Spirit, but in *Hope*, for he that ſoweth muſt ſow in *Hope*, elſe his Plough will not go deep, 1 *Cor.* ix. 10. This then is the very Spirit and Life of Religion, *the Reſurrection of the dead*, without which *our Faith were in vain; and Men would continue ſtill in their Sins*. Certainly, it is the deep Inconſideration of this never-ending Endurance of our Souls, and Reſtitution of our Bodies to the ſame Immortality, that makes the moſt Part of Men ſo ſlight and ſuperficial in Religion, elſe it were not poſſible, if that were laid to Heart, but Men would make Religion their Buſineſs, and chief Buſineſs.

We have here the two genuine Cauſes of the Reſurrection of the Bodies of Chriſtians, the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, and the

the *Inhabitation of his Spirit.* The Influence that the Reſurrection of Chriſt hath on ours, is lively and fully holden out by this Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* xv. againſt them who deny the Reſurrection from the dead. *If Chriſt be not raiſed, your Faith is in vain, you are yet in your Sins, and they that are aſleep are periſhed.* Religion were nothing but a Number of empty Words of Show; preaching were a Vanity and Impoſture; Faith were a mere Fancy, if this be not laid down as the Ground-ſtone, *Chriſt raiſed,* not as a *natural Perſon,* but as a *common politick Perſon,* as *the firſt Fruits of them that ſleep,* ver. 17, 18, 19, 20. where he alludes to the Ceremony of offering the *firſt Fruits of their Harveſt,* Lev. xxiii. 10. for under the Law they might not eat of the Fruits of the Land till they were ſanctified, all was counted prophane till they were ſome way conſecrated to the Lord. Now, for this End, the Lord appointed them to bring one Sheaf for all, and that was the Repreſentative of all the reſt of the Heap, and this was waved before the Lord, and lifted up from the Earth. Now, according to the Apoſtle's Argument, *Rom.* xi. 16. *If the firſt Fruits be holy, ſo is the Lump,* for it repreſents all the Lump; and therefore *Jeſus Chriſt* the Chief of all his Brethren, was made the firſt Fruits from the dead, and lifted up from the Grave, as the Repreſenter of all the Lump of his Elect; and ſo it muſt needs follow, that they ſhall not continue in the Grave, but muſt in due Time partake of that Benefit which he has firſt entred in Poſſeſſion of, in their Name, and for them: For if this firſt Fruits be holy, ſo the whole Lump muſt be holy; and if the firſt Fruits be riſen, ſo muſt the Lump. You ſee then the force of the preſent Reaſon, *If the Spirit that raiſed Chriſt dwell in you, he ſhall alſo raiſe you,* namely, becauſe he raiſed up Chriſt the very firſt Fruits of all the reſt; ſo that Chriſt's Reſurrection is a ſure Pledge and Token of yours, and both together are the main Baſis and Ground-work of all your Hope and Salvation, the Neglect and Inconſideration whereof, makes the moſt part of pretended Chriſtians to walk according to that *Epicurean* Principle, *Let us eat and drink, for To-morrow we ſhall die*; as if there were no Life to come, they with-hold nothing from their carnal Minds, that can ſatisfy or pleaſe their Luſts. But for you who deſire a Part in this Reſurrection, and dare ſcarcely believe ſo great a Thing, or entertain ſuch a high Hope, becauſe of the Sight of your Unworthineſs; As you would be awakned by this Hope to *Righteouſneſs, and to ſin no more,* ver. 34. of that Chap. ſo you may encourage your ſelves to that Hope, by the Reſurrection of Chriſt; for it is that which hath the mighty Influence, *to beget you to a lively Hope,* 1 Pet. i. 3. Look upon this as the grand Intent, and ſpecial Deſign of Chriſt's both dying and riſing again, *that he might be the firſt Fruits to ſanctify all the Lump.* Nevertheleſs, it is not the Defect of your Bodies, for they are often a great Impediment and Retardment to the Spirit, and lodgeth the Enemy within their Walls, when he is chaſed out of the Mind by the Law of the Spirit of Life; but it is the great Deſign of God, through the whole Work of Redemption, and the Deſert of Chriſt your Head; and therefore you may entertain that Hope, but take heed to walk worthy of it, and that is *if we have this Hope, let us purify ourſelves, let us who believe that we*

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are risen with Christ, set our Affections on Things above, else we dishonour him that is risen in our Name, and we dishonour that Temple of the Holy Ghost, which he will one Day make so glorious.

SERMON XXXI.

Vers. 11. *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you: He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall quicken your mortal Bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

AS there is a twofold *Death*, the Death of the Soul, and the Death of the Body; so there is a double Resurrection, the Resurrection of the Soul *from the Power of Sin*, and the Resurrection of the *Body from the Grave*. As the *first Death* is that which is spiritual, *then* that which is bodily; so the *first Resurrection* is of the Spirit, then the *second* of the Body, and these two have a Connexion together; therefore, saith the Apostle *John*, *Blessed are they who have part in the first Resurrection, for on such the second Death hath no Power, but they shall be Priests to God*, &c. *Rom.* ii. 6. Although Death must seize on their Bodies, yet the Sting wherein the Strength of it lies, is taken away by Christ; that it hath no Power to hurt him, whose Spirit is raised out of the Grave of Sin. And truly it is hard to tell which is the greatest Change, or the most difficult, to raise a *Body* out of Corruption to Life, or to raise a *Soul* out of Sin to Grace. But both are the greatest Changes that can be, and shadowed out under the Similitude of the greatest in Nature, for our Conversion to God is a *new Birth*, a *new Creation*, and a *Resurrection* in Scripture Stile; and so both require one and the same Power, *the Almighty Power of his Spirit, you who were dead in Sin hath he quickned*, &c. O! what a notable Change, it maketh them no longer the same Men, but new Creatures; and therefore it is the Death of Sin, and the Resurrection of the Soul; for as long as it is under the Chains of Darkness and Power of Sin, it is free among the dead, it is buried in the vilest Sepulchre. Old Graves, and these full of Rottenness and dead Mens Bones, are nothing to express the lamentable Case of such a Soul; and yet such are all by Nature; whatsoever Excellency or Endowment Men may have from their Birth or Education, yet certainly they are but Apparitions rather than any real Substance, and which is worse, their Bodies is the Sepulchre of their Souls, and if the Corruption of a Soul were sensible, we would think all the Putrifactions of bodily Things, but Shadows of it. And therefore no sooner is there any inward Life begotten in a Soul,

but

but this is the very first Exercise of it, the Abhorrency of the Soul upon the Sight and Smell of its own Lothsomeness.

Now, there is no Hope of any reviving; tho' all the Wisdom and Art of Men and Angels were employed in this Business, there is nothing able to quicken one such Soul, until it please the Lord to speak such a Word as he did to *Lazarus*, *Arise, come forth*, and send his Spirit to accomplish his Word, and this will do it; when the Spirit cometh into the Soul, he quickeneth it, and this is the first Resurrection: O! blessed are they who have Part in this, whose Souls are drawn out of the Dungeon of Darkness and Ignorance, and brought forth to behold this glorious Light that shineth in the Gospel, and raised out of the Grave of the Lusts of Ignorance, to live unto God henceforth; for such they have their Part in the second Resurrection to Life, for you see these are conjoined, *If the Spirit dwell in you, he shall raise you*, &c. You see here two Grounds and Reasons of the Resurrection of the Body, *Christ's rising*, and the *Spirit's indwelling*; now I find these in the Scripture made the two Fountains of all Christianity, both of the first and second Resurrection.

The Resurrection of Christ is an Evidence of our Justification, the Cause of our Quickening or Vivification, and the Ground and Pledge of our last Resurrection; and all these are Grounds of strong Consolation. The *first* you have, *Rom.* iv. 25. *Christ died for our Sins, and rose for our Justification*; and the *ver.* 34. of this *chap. Christ is dead, yea, rather has risen again; who then shall condemn?* Here is a clear Evidence, that he hath paid the Debt wholly, and satisfied Justice fully: Since he was under the Power of Death, imprisoned by Justice, certainly he would not have won free, if he had not paid the uttermost Farthing; therefore his glorious Resurrection is a sure Manifestation of his present Satisfaction, it is a publick Acquittance and Absolution of him from all our Debt, and so by Consequence, of all he died for; for their Debt was laid upon him, and now he is discharged; and therefore the believing Soul may tremblingly boast, who shall condemn me? for it is God that justifieth. Why? because all my Sins were laid on Christ, and God hath in a most solemn Manner acquitted and discharged him from all, when he raised him from the Dead; and therefore he cannot, and none other can sue me, or prosecute a Plea against me, since my Cautioner is fully exonered of this Undertaking, even by the great Creditor, God himself. But then, his Resurrection is a Pawn or Pledge of the spiritual raising of the Soul from Sin: As the Death of Christ is made the Pledge of our dying to Sin, so his rising, of our living to God, *Rom.* vi. 4, 5. These are not meer Patterns and Examples of spiritual Things, but assured Pledges of the divine Virtue and Power, which he being raised again should send Abroad throughout the World: For, as there are *Coronation-Gifts*, when Kings are solemnly installed in Office, so there are *Coronation Mercies, Triumphal Gifts*; when Christ rose and ascended, he bestowed them on the World, *Eph.* iv. And certainly these are the greatest, the Vertue of his Death to kill the old Man, and the Power of his Resurrection to quicken the new; and by Faith, a Believer is united and ingrafted into him, as a Plant into a choice Stock, and by Vertue and Sap coming from Christ's Death and Resurrection, he is transformed into the Similitude of both:

both: He groweth into the Likeneſs of his Death, by dying to Sin, by crucifying theſe inward Affections and Inclinations to it; and he groweth up into the Similitude of his Reſurrection, by Newneſs of Life, or being alive to God, in holy Deſires and Endeavours after Holineſs and Obedience. And thus the firſt Reſurrection of the Soul floweth from Chriſt's Reſurrection.

But add unto this, that Chriſt's riſing is the Pledge and Pawn of the ſecond Reſurrection, that is, of the Body; for he is the Head, and we the Members: Now it is moſt incongruous, that the Head ſhould riſe and not draw up the Members after him; certainly he will not ceaſe till he have drawn up all his Members to him: If the Head be above Water, it is a ſure Pledge that the Body will win out of the Water; if the Root be alive, certainly the Branches will ſhoot out in Spring-time, they ſhall live alſo. There is that Connexion betwixt Chriſt and Believers, that wonderful Communication between them, that Chriſt did nothing, was nothing, and had nothing to him, but what he did, and was, and ſuffered perſonating them, and all the Benefit and Advantage redounds to them. He would not be conſidered of, as a Perſon by himſelf, but would rather be ſtill taken in with the Children: As for Love, he came down and took Fleſh to be like them, and did take their Sin and Miſery off them, and ſo was content to be looked upon by God as in the Place of Sinners, as the chief Sinner; ſo he is content and deſirous, that we ſhould look on him as in the Place of Sinners, as dying, as riſing for us, as having no Excellency or Privilege incommunicable to us: And this was not hid from the Church of old, but preſented as the grand Conſolation, *Thy dead Men ſhall live, together with my dead Body they ſhall riſe*: And therefore may poor Souls awake and ſing, though they muſt dwell in the Duſt, yet as the Dew and Influence of Heaven maketh Herbs to ſpring out of the Earth, ſo the Vertue of this Reſurrection ſhall make the *Earth and Sea and Air to caſt out and render their Dead*, Iſa. xxvi. 19. Upon what a ſure and ſtrong Chain hangs the Salvation of poor Sinners? I wiſh Chriſtians might ſalute one another with this, *Chriſt is riſen*, and ſo *comfort one another with theſe Words*; or rather, every one would apply this Cordial to his own Heart, *Chriſt is riſen*: And you know what a golden Chain this draweth after it, therefore we muſt riſe and live.

The other Cauſe which is more immediate, and will actively accompliſh it, is the *Spirit dwelling in us*: for there is a ſuitable Method here too: As the Lord firſt raiſed the Head Chriſt, and will then raiſe the Members, and he that doth the one cannot but do the other; ſo the Spirit firſt raiſeth the Soul from the woful Fall into Sin which killed us, and ſo maketh it a Temple, and the Body too, for both are bought with a Price, and therefore the Spirit poſſeſſeth both; But the inmoſt Reſidence is in the *Soul*, and the *bodily Members* are made Servants of Righteouſneſs, which is a great Honour and Dignity, in regard of that baſe Imployment they had once; and ſo it is moſt ſuitable that he who hath thus dwelt in both, repair his own Dwelling-houſe: For here it is ruinous, and therefore muſt be caſt down; but becauſe it was once *a Temple for the Holy Ghoſt*, therefore it will be repaired and built again, for he that once honoured it with his Preſence, will not ſuffer Corruption always to dwell

in it: For what Christ by his Humiliation and Suffering purchased, the Spirit hath this Commission to perform it; and what is it but the Restitution of Mankind to an happier Estate in the *second Adam*, than ever the first was into. Now, since our Lord, who pleased to take on our Flesh, did not put it off again, but admits it to the Fellowship of the same Glory in Heaven, in that he died, he dies no more, Death hath no more Dominion over him, he will never be wearied or ashamed of that human Cloathing of Flesh; and therefore certainly that the Children may be like the Father, the Followers their Captain, the Members not disproportioned to the Head, the Branches not different and heterogeneous to the Stock, and that our rising in Christ may leave no Footstep of our Falling, no Remainder of our Misery; therefore the Spirit of Christ will also quicken the mortal Bodies of Believers, and make them like Christ's glorious Body.

This must be done with divine Power, and what more powerful than the Spirit? For it is the Spirits or subtile Parts in all Creatures that causeth all Motions, and worketh all Effects. What then is that Almighty Spirit not able to do? You have Shadows of this in Nature, yea, convincing Evidences; for what is the Spring, but a Resurrection of the Earth? Is not the World every Year renewed, and riseth again out of the Grave of Winter? as you find it elegantly expressed, *Psal.* cvii. and doth not the Grains of Seed die in the Clods, before they rise to the Harvest, 1 *Cor.* xv. All the Vicissitudes and Alterations in Nature, give us a plain Draught of this great Change, and certainly it is one Spirit that effects all.

But though there be the same Power required, to raise up the Bodies of the Godly and Ungodly; yet, O what infinite Distance and Difference in the Nature and Ends of their Resurrections! There is the *Resurrection of Life*, and the *Resurrection of Condemnation*, Joh. v. 29. O! happy they who rise to Life that ever they died! But O miserable, thrice wretched are all others that they may not be dead for ever. The Immortality of the Soul was infinite Misery, because it is that which eternizes their Misery; but when this *Overplus* is added, the Incorruptibility of the Body, and so the whole Man made an inconsumable Subject, for that Fire to feed upon perpetually, what Heart can conceive it without Horror! And yet we hear it often without any such Affection. It is a strange *Life*, that *Death* is the only Refreshment of it; and yet this may not be had, *they shall seek Death, and it shall fly from them.* Now, my Beloved, I would desire this Discourse might open Way for the hearty and cordial Intertainment of the Gospel, and that you might be perswaded *to awake unto Righteousness, and sin no more*, 1 Cor. xv. 34. *Be not deceived, my Brethren, Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.* Certainly, if you have no other Image than what you come in to the World withal, you cannot have this Hope, to be conformed one Day to the glorious Body of Christ: What will become of you in that Day, who declare now by the continued Vent of your Hearts, that this holy Spirit dwells not in you? And, alas! how many are such? Oh! pity your selves, your Souls and Bodies both. If for Love to your Bodies, you will follow its present Lusts, and care only for the Things of the Body, you act the greatest Enmity and Hostility against your own Bodies. Consider, I beseech you, the eternal State

State of both, and your Care and Study will run in another Channel. And for you who have any working of the Spirit in you, whether convincing you of Sin and Misery, and of Righteousness in Christ; or sometimes comforting you by the Word applied to your Heart; or teaching you another Way than the World walks into, I recommend unto you that of the *Apostle's*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. *Wherefore my Brethren, be stedfast*, &c. *always abounding in the Work of the Lord, knowing your Labour is not in vain.*

SERMON XXXII.

Verse 12. *Therefore Brethren, we are Debters not to the Flesh, to live after the Flesh*, &c.

ALL Things in *Christianity* have a near and strait Conjunction, it is so entire and absolute a Piece, that if *one Link* be loosed, all the Chain falls to the Ground, and if *one* be well fastned upon the Heart, it brings all alongst with it: Some speak of all Truths, even in Nature, that they are knit so together, that *any Truth* may be concluded out of *every Truth*, at least by a long Circuit of Deduction and Reasoning; but whatsoever be of that, certainly *Religion* is a more entire Thing, and all the Parts of it more nearly conjoined together, that they may mutually enforce one another; Precepts and Promises are thus linked together, that if any Soul lay hold indeed upon any Promise of Grace, he draws alongst with it the Obligation of some Precept to walk suitable to such precious Promises. There is no *Encouragement* you can indeed fasten upon, but it will join you as nearly to the *Commandment*; and no Consolation in the Gospel, that doth not carry within its Bosom an *Exhortation* to holy walking. Again, on the other Hand, there is no *Precept*, but it should lead you straight way to a *Promise*, no *Exhortation*, but it is invironed before and behind with a strong *Consolation*, to make it pierce the deeper, and go down the sweeter. Therefore you see, how easily the Apostle digresseth from the one to the other, how sweetly and pertinently these are interwoven in his Discourse. The first Word of the Chapter is a Word of *strong Consolation, There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ*, and this like a Flood carries all down with it, all *Precepts* and *Exhortations*, and the Soul of a Believer with them; and therefore he subjoins an *Exhortation* to holy and spiritual Walking upon that very Ground: And because Commandments of this Nature will not float (so to speak) unless they have much Water of that kind, and cannot have such a swift Course, except the Tide of such Encouragements flow fast; therefore he openeth that Spring again in the preceeding

Words, and letteth the Rivers of Consolation flow forth, even the *Hope of Immortality and eternal Life*: And this certainly will raiſe up a Soul that was on Ground, and carry him above in Motion of Obedience; and therefore he may well, in the next place, ſtir them up to their Duty, and mind them of their Obligation, *therefore Brethren, we are Debters, not to the Fleſh.* To make this the more effectual, he drops it in with Affection, in a ſweet *Compellation* of Love and Equality, *Brethren.* There is nothing ſo powerful in Perſuaſion, as *Love*, it will ſweeten a bitter and unpleaſant Reproof, and make it go down more eaſily; though it maketh leſs Noiſe than Threatnings and Severity and Authority; yet it is more forcible, for it inſinuates itſelf, and in a Manner ſurpriſeth the Soul, and ſo preventeth all Reſiſtance: As when the Sun made the Traveller part with his Cloak, whereas the Wind and Rain made him hold it faſter; ſo Affection will prevail, where Authority and Terror cannot: It will melt that, which a ſtronger Power cannot break: The Story of *Elijah*, 1 *King.* xix. may give ſome Repreſentation of this, *The Lord was not in the ſtrong Wind, nor in the terrible Earth-quake, nor yet in the Fire, but in the calm ſtill Voice*: The Lord hath choſen this Way of publiſhing his Grace in the Goſpel, becauſe the Sum of it is *Love to Sinners, and Good-will towards Men*: He holds it forth in the calm Voice of *Love*, and theſe who are his Ambaſſadors ſhould be cloathed with ſuch an Affection, if they intend to prevail with Men, to engage their Affections. O! that we were poſſeſſed with that brotherly Love one towards another, for the Salvation one of another; eſpecially, that the Preachers of the Goſpel might be thus kindly affectioned towards others, and that you would take it thus, the calling you off the Ways of *Sin*, as an Act of the greateſt Love. But then conſider the *Equality* of this Obligation, for there is nothing preſſed upon you, but what lieth as heavily upon them that preſſeth it: This Debt binds all. O! that the Miniſters of the Goſpel could carry the Impreſſion of this on their Hearts, that when they perſuade others, they may withal perſuade themſelves; and when they ſpeak to others, they may ſit down among the Hearers. If an *Apoſtle* of ſo eminent Dignity levelleth himſelf in this Conſideration, *therefore Brethren we are Debters*; how much more ought *Paſtors* and *Teachers* to come in the ſame Rank and Degree of Debt and Obligation with others: Truly, this is the great Obſtruction of the Succeſs of the Goſpel, that theſe who bind on Burdens on others, do not themſelves touch them with one of their Fingers; and while they ſeem ſerious in perſuading others, yet withal declare by their Carriage, that they do not believe themſelves what they bear upon others; ſo that *preaching* ſeemeth to be an *Impoſture*, and *Affections* in perſuading of others to be borrowed as it were *in a Scene* to be laid down again out of it. But then again, there is a Miſconceit among People, that this holy and ſpiritual Walking is not of common Obligation, but peculiar to the *Preachers* of the Goſpel. Many make their Reckoning ſo, as if they were not called to ſuch high Aims and great Endeavours; but truly, my Beloved, this is a Thing of common Concernment, the Holy Ghoſt hath levelled us all in this Point of Duty, as he hath equally exalted all in the moſt ſubſtantial Dignities, and Privileges of the Goſpel: This

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Bond is upon the higheſt and upon the loweſt, Greatneſs doth not exempt from it, and Meanneſs doth not exclude from it; though commonly *great Perſons* fancy an Immunity from the Strictneſs of a holy Converſation, becauſe of their *Greatneſs*, and often *mean and low Perſons* pretend a Freedom from ſuch *a high Obligation*, becauſe of their Lowneſs; yet certainly all are Debt-bound this Way, and muſt one Day give Account. You that are poor and unlearned, and have not received great Things of that Nature from God, do not think your ſelves *free*, do not abſolve your ſelves, for there is infinite Debt beſides that: You will have no Place for that Excuſe, that you had not *great Parts*, were not learned, and ſo forth. For as the Obligation reaches you all, ſo there is as patent a Way to the Exerciſe of Religion in the pooreſt Cottage, as in the higheſt Palace: You may ſerve God as acceptably in *little*, as others may do in *much*: There is no Condition ſo *low* and *abject*, that layeth any Reſtraint on this *noble Service* and Imployment: This Jewel loſes not its Beauty and Vertue, when it lieth in a Dung-hill, more than when it is ſet in Gold.

But let us enquire further into this Debt, *we are Debters*, ſaith he; and he inſtanceth what is not the Creditor, by which he giveth us to underſtand, who is the true Creditor: *Not the Fleſh*, and therefore to make out the juſt Oppoſition, it muſt be *the Spirit*: We are Debters then to the *Spirit*. And what is the Debt we owe to him, we may know it that ſame Way, *we owe not to the Fleſh* ſo much as to make us live after its Guidance and Direction, and fulfil its Luſts; then by due *Conſequence*, we owe ſo much to the Spirit, as that we *ſhould live after the Spirit*, and reſign our ſelves wholly to him, his Guidance and Direction. There is a twofold Kind of Debt upon the Creature, one *remiſſible* and pardonable, another *irremiſſible* and unpardonable (ſo to ſpeak) *the Debt of Sin*, and that is the *Guilt* of it, which is nothing elſe than the Obligation of the Sinner over to eternal Condemnation by Vertue of the Curſe of God: Every Sinner cometh under this Debt to *Divine Juſtice*, the Deſert of eternal Wrath, and the actual Ordination by a divine Sentence, to that Wrath. Now indeed, this *Debt* was inſoluble to us, and utterly unpayable, until God ſent his Son to be our *Cautioner*, and he hath payed the Debt in his own Perſon, by bearing our Curſe, and ſo made it pardonable to Sinners, obtained a Relaxation from that woful Obligation to *Death*: And this Debt you ſee is wholly diſcharged to them that are in *Chriſt*, by another Sentence repealing the former Curſe; *Ver.* 1. *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt.* But there is another *Debt* which I may call *a Debt of Duty and Obedience*, which, as it was antecedent to Sin, even binding innocent *Adam*; ſo the Obligation of the *Debt of Sin* hath been ſo far from taking it away, that it is rather increaſed exceedingly, and this *Debt is unpardonable and indiſpenſible*, the more of the Debt of Sin be pardoned, and the more the Curſe be diſpenſed with, the more the Sinner owes of Love and Obedience to God, *ſhe loved much becauſe much was forgiven*; and the more was forgiven of Sin, the more ſhe owed of Love, and the more Debt was diſcharged, the more ſhe was indebted to him: And therefore, after this general Acquitance of all Believers, *Verſe* 1. he preſſeth this Obligation the more ſtrongly, *therefore*

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Brethren we are Debters: It is like that Debt ſpoken of, *Rom.* xii. *Owe no Man any Thing, but love one another*, which is not meant that it is unlawful to be Debters to Men, but rather, what ye owe, or all Things elſe, pay it, and ye are free, your Debt ceaſes, and your Bond is cancelled; but as for the *Debt of Love and Benevolence*, you muſt ſo owe that to all Men, as never to be diſcharged of it, never to be freed from of it; when you have done all, this hath no Limitation of Time or Action: Even ſo it is here, other Debts when paid, Men ceaſe to be Debters, then they are free; but here the more he pay, the more he is bound to pay, he oweth, and he oweth eternally, his Bond is never cancelled as long as he continues a Creature ſubſiſting in *God*, and abides a redeemed one in *Chriſt*; for theſe continuing, his Obligation is eternally recent and freſh as the firſt Day: And this doth not at all obſcure the infinite Grace of God, or diminiſh the Happineſs of Saints, that they are not freed from this Debt of Love and Obedience, but rather illuſtrates the one, and increaſes the other, for it cannot be ſuppoſed to conſiſt with the Wiſdom and Holineſs of God to looſe his Creature from that Obligation of loving Obedience and Subjection, which is eſſential to it, and it is no leſs repugnant to the Happineſs of the Creature to be free from *Righteouſneſs*, unto *Sin*.

Now, this Debt of Duty and Obedience hath a threefold Bond, which becauſe they ſtand in vigor uncancelled for all Eternity, therefore the Obligation ariſing from them is eternal too. *The Bond of Creation, the Bond of Redemption, and the Bond of Sanctification*, theſe are diſtinguiſhed according to the Perſons of the Trinity, who appear moſt eminently in them.

We owe our *Being* to the *Father*, in whom *we live and move and have our Being*; *for he made us, and not we our ſelves*, and we are all the Works of his Hands: Now the Debt accruing from this, is infinite; if Men conceive themſelves ſo much obliged to others for a petty Courteſy, as to be their *Servants*; if they owe more to their *Parents* the Inſtruments of their bringing forth into the World, O how *infinitely* more owe we to God, of whom we are, and have all! Doth the *Clay* owe ſo much to the *Potter*, who doth not *make* it, but *faſhion* it only? And what owe we to him that made us of nothing, and faſhioned us while we were yet without Form? Truly, all Relations, all Obligations evaniſh when this cometh forth; becauſe all that a Man hath is leſs than *himſelf*, than his *immortal Spirit*, and that he oweth alone to God; and beſides whatſoever Debt there is to other Fellow-creatures in any Thing, God is the principal Creditor in that Bond. All the Creatures are but the *Servants of this King*, which at his ſole Appointment bring alongs his Gifts unto us; and therefore we owe no more to them, than to the Hands of the Meſſenger that is ſent. Now, by this Accompt, nothing is our *own*, not *our ſelves*, not our *Members*, not our *Goods*; but all are *his*, and to be uſed and beſtowed not at the Will and Arbitriment of Creatures, but to be abſolutely and ſolely at his Diſpoſal, who hath the ſole ſovereign Right to them: and therefore, you may take up the Heinouſneſs of Sin, how monſtruous and misſhappen a Thing it is, that breaks this inviolable Law of Creation, and withdraws the Crea-

Creature from Subjection to him, in whom alone it can subsist. O how disordered are the Courses and Lives of Men? Men living to *themselves*, their *own Lusts*, after their *own Will*, as if they had made themselves; Men using their *Members as Weapons of Unrighteousness against God*, as if their Tongues, and Hands and Feet were their own, or the Devils, and not God's. Call to Mind this Obligation, *Remember thy Creator*, that *Memento* would be a strong Engagement to another Course than most take: How absurd would you think it, to please your selves in displeasing him, if you but minded the Bond of *Creation*. But when there are other two superadded, what we owe to the *Son*, for coming down in the Likeness of sinful Flesh for us, and what we owe to the *Holy Ghost* for quickning our Spirits, and afterward for the Resurrection of our Bodies, whose Hearts would not these overcome and lead captive to his Love and Obedience.

SERMON XXXIII.

Verse 12, 13. *Therefore Brethren, we are Debters, not to the Flesh, to live after the Flesh: For for if ye live after the Flesh, ye shall die,* &c.

WAS it not enough to contain Men in Obedience to God, the very essential Bond of Dependence upon God as the Original and Fountain of his *Being*! And yet Man hath cast away this Cord from him, and withdrew from that Alledgance he did owe to his *Maker*, by transgressing his holy Commandments. But God not willing that all should perish, he hath confirmed and strengthned that primitive Obligation, by two other as strong, if not more; if the Father did most eminently appear in the *first*, the *Son* is manifested in the *second*, and that is the Work of the *Redemption of Man*, no less glorious than his *first Creation*: He made him first, and then he sent his own Son in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, to make him again by his Spirit: And now a threefold Cord is not easily broken. It seems this should bind invincibly, and constrain us not to be *our own, but the Lord's*: And now truly, they who are in Jesus Christ, are thrice indebted wholly to God. But the two last Obligations are the most special, and most wonderful, that God sent *his Son* for us, to redeem us from Sin and Misery, and to restore Man to Happiness took on a miserable and accursed Habit, that so *glorious a Person* gave himself for so *base one*; that so *excellent a Lord* became a *Servant* for the *Rebel*; that he whose the Earth is, and the Fullness thereof, did

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empty himself of all to *supply us*: And in a Word, the most wonderful Exchange be made that ever the Sun saw, *God for Men, his Life a Ransom for their Life:* All the rare Inventions, and fancied Stories of Men, come infinitely short of this: The Light never saw Majesty so abased, and Love so expressed, as in this Matter; and all to this Purpose, that we who had undone our selves, might be made up again, and the Righteousness of the Law fulfilled in us. At first he *made* us, but it cost him nothing but a *Word*; but now, to *buy* that which was taken captive by Sin, and at so dear a rate, *ye are bought with a Price, and this Price more precious than the Sum of Heaven and Earth could amount to*, suppose by some rare *Alchymy* the Earth were all converted into Gold, and the Heavens into precious Stones; yet these corruptible and material Things come as far short of this Ransom, as an Heap of Dung is unproportioned to a Mass of Gold, or Heap of Jewels. Now, you that are thus bought, may ye not conclude, *therefore we are Debters*, and whereof? Of *our selves*, for *we*, our *Person*, *Estates* and *all* were sold, and *all* are bought with this Price; therefore *we are not our own, but the Lord's*, and therefore we ought *to glorifie God in our Bodies and Spirits which are his*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Should we henceforth claim an Interest and Propriety in our selves? Should we have a Will of our own? Should we serve our selves with our Members? O how monstrous and absurd were that! Certainly, a *believing Heart* cannot but look upon that as the greatest Indignity, and vilest Impiety, that ever the Sun shined upon: *Ingratitude* hath a Note of Ignominy, even among Heathens, put upon it; they esteemed the Reproach of it the Compend of all Reproaches, *Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris*. And truly it hath the most abominable Visage of any Vice; yea, it is all Sins drawn through other in one Table. Certainly, a godly Heart cannot but account this execrable and detestable, henceforth to have any proper and peculiar Will and Pleasure, and cannot but devout it *self* wholly to his Will and Pleasure, for whose Pleasure all were first created, and who then redeemed us by the Blood of his Son. I wish we could have this Image of *Ingratitude* always observant to our Eyes and Minds when we are inticed with our Lusts, to study our own Satisfaction. But there is *another Bond* superadded to this, which mightily aggravates the Debt. *He hath given us his Spirit to dwell within, as well as his Son for us.* And O the marvellous and strange Effects that this Spirit hath in the favours of Men! He truly repairs that Image of God, which *Sin* broke down; he furnisheth the Soul, and supplies it in all its Necessities; he is a Light and Life to it, a Spring of everlasting Life and Consolation; so that to the *Spirit* we owe that we are made again after his Image, and the precious Purchase of Christ applyed unto our Souls. For *him* hath our Saviour left to execute his Latter-will in behalf of his Children. And these Things are but the first Fruits of the Spirit, any Peace, or Joy, or Love, or Obedience, are but an Earnest of that which is coming: We shall be yet more beholden to him, when the Walls of Flesh are taken down, he will carry forth the Soul into that glorious Liberty of the Sons of God; and not long after he shall quicken our very Dust, and raise it up in Glory to the Fellowship of that Happiness. Now, my Beloved, consider what all this tends to, mark the Inference you

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ſhould make from it, *Therefore we are Debters, Debters indeed,* under infinite Obligations for infinite Mercies: But what is the Debt we owe? Truly it might be conceived to be ſome rare Thing, equivalent to ſuch unconceivable Benefits: But mark what it is, *to live after the Spirit, and not after the Fleſh,* to conform our Affections and Actions, and the Tenor of our Way and Courſe, to the Direction of the *Spirit,* to have our Spirits led and enlightned by the *Holy Spirit,* and not to follow the Indictment of our Fleſh and carnal Minds. Now truly, it is a Wonder that it is no other Thing than this, for this is no other Thing than what we owe to our ſelves, and to our own Natures, ſo to ſpeak; for truly there is a Conformity and Suitableneſs of ſome Things to the very Nature of Man, that is, beautiful, ſome Things are decent and becomes it, other Things are undecent and uncomely, unſuitable to the very *reaſonable Being* of Man, ſo that they put a Stain and Blot upon it.

Now indeed, there is nothing can be conceived more agreeable to the very Conſtitution of Man's Nature than this, that the far better and more excellent Part, ſhould *lead and command,* and the baſer and earthly Part ſhould *obey and follow*; that the Fleſh ſhould *miniſter* and ſerve the *Spirit*; *doth not even Nature it ſelf teach it?* And yet, no heavier Yoke is put upon us, than what our own Nature hath put upon us already, which indeed is wonderful; and certainly this wonderful attempering of his Laws unto the very natural Exigence of the Spirit of Man, makes the Tranſgreſſion of them ſo much the more hainous.

Now, all theſe three forementioned Bonds do jointly bind on this Law upon Man; in *general,* they oblige ſtrongly to Subjection and Obedience to the Will of God; but particularly, they have a conſtraining Influence upon this, *living after the Spirit, and after the Fleſh:* Our very *Creation* ſpeaks this forth, when God made Man after his own Image, when he beautified the Spirit of Man with that Divine Similitude and Likeneſs, in that he breathed a *Spirit* from Heaven, and took a Body out of the Duſt, and then exalted that heavenly Piece to ſome Participation of his own Nature: Doth not all this cry aloud upon us, that the Order of Creation is now diſſolved, that the Beauty of it is marred, that all is turned up ſide-down, when Mens *Paſſions* and *Senſes* are their only *Guides,* and the Principles of Light in their Conſcience are choakt, and ſtiffled? Doth not all this teach us plainly that we ſhould not live after the Fleſh? That we owe not ſo much to this brutiſh Part., as to enthrone it and impower it over us? That it were vileſt *Anarchy,* and moſt intolerable Confuſion and Uſurpation, to give it the Power over us, as moſt Men do? That there can be no Order or Beauty in Man, till the *Spirit* be unfettered from the Chains of fleſhly Luſts, and reſtored to the native Dignity and Preheminency, and ſo keep the Body in Subjection? And indeed *Paul* was ſo, 1 *Cor.* ix. 27. *I keep my Body in Subjection, and beat it down,* becauſe it is an imperious Slave, an uſurping Slave, and will command, if not beaten and kept under.

Again, Chriſt hath put a Bond upon us to this very ſame, he hath ſtrengthned this Obligation with a new Cord, in that he gave his precious Life a Ranſom for the Souls of Men; this was the principal Thing he paid for (the Body only being an acceſſory and Appendix to the Soul) for it is ſaid, *The Redemption of the*

Soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever, Psal. xlix. 8. and *What can a Man give in exchange for his Soul*, Mark viii. 37. For what *material Thing* can equalize a *Spirit*? Many Things may be had more precious and fine than the Body, but all of them have no Proportion to a *Spiritual Being*. Now then, in that so dear a Ransom, and so infinite a Price must be given for the *Spirit* of Man, it declares the infinite Worth and Excellency of it above the Body, and above all visible Things: And here's indeed the greatest Confirmation that can be imagined, God hath valued it, he hath put the Soul of Man in the Ballance, to find something equal in Weight of Dignity and Worth, and when all that is in Heaven and Earth is put in the other Scale, the Soul is Down-weight by far: There is such Distance, that there is no Proportion; only the *Life and Blood of his own Son* weighs it down, and is an Overvalue; and thus in our Redemption we have a visible Demonstration (as it were) of the infinite Obligation of this Law, *not to live after that contemptible Part, our Flesh, but to follow after the Motions and Directions of an enlightned Spirit*; not to spend our Thoughts, Care and Time upon the Body, and making Provision for the Lusts thereof (as most Men do, and all by Nature are now inclined to do) but to be taken up with the immortal precious Jewel that is *within*, how to have it rubbed and cleansed from all the Filth, that Sin and the Flesh hath cast upon it; and restored to that native Beauty, *the Image of God in Righteousness and Holiness*. If you in your Practice and Affection turn the Scales otherwise, and make the *Body* and Things of the *Body*, suppose the *whole World*, down-weigh in your Affection and imagination, you have plainly contradicted the just Measure of the Sanctuary, and in effect you declare that *Christ died in vain*, and gave his Life out of an Error and Mistake of the Worth of the Soul: You say, he needed not have given such a Price for it, seeing every Day you weigh it down with every Triffle of momentany fleshly Satisfaction.

Lastly, the *Spirit* binds this fast upon us; for the Soul of Man he hath chosen for his Habitation, and there he delights to dwell, in the Heart of the contrite and humble; and this he intends to beautify and garnish, and to restore it to that primitive Excellency it once had. The *Spirit* of Man is nearer his Nature, and more capable of being conformed unto it; and therefore his peculiar and special Work is about our *Spirits*. *First*, to enlighten and convince them; *then*, to reform and direct them and lead them; and this binds as forcibly, and constraineth a Believer certainly to resign himself to the *Spirit*; to study how to order his Walk after that Direction, and to be more and more abstracted from the Satisfaction of his *Body*; else he cannot choose but grieve the *Spirit*, his best Friend, which alone is the Fountain of Joy and Peace to him, and being grieved, cannot but grieve himself next.

Now, my Beloved, consider, if you owe so much to the Flesh, whether or not it be so steadable and profitable unto you? And if you think it can give you a sufficient Reward to compense all your Pains in satisfying it, go on; but, I believe, you can reckon no good Office that ever it did you, and your Expectation is less. What Fruit have you of all, but *Shame* and *Vexation* of Conscience? And what can you expect but *Death*, the last Fruits of it? What then do you owe

owe unto it? Are you Debters to its *Pleasure* and Satisfaction, which hath never done you good, and will do you eternal Hurt? Consider whether you are so much bound and obliged to it, as to lose your Souls for it? One of them must be; and whether or not you be not more obliged to God the *Father*, and his *Son Jesus Christ, to live after the Spirit*; though for the present it should be painful to beat down your Body. You are Debters indeed, but you owe nothing to the Flesh, but Stripes and Mortification.

SERMON XXXIV.

Verse 13. *For if ye live after the Flesh, ye shall die: But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye shall live.*

THough the Lord, out of his absolute Sovereignty, might deal with Man in such a Way, as nothing should appear but his supreme *Will* and *Almighty Power*; he might simply command Obedience, and without any more Persuasions, either leave Men to the Frowardness of their own Natures, or else powerfully constrain them to their Duty; yet he hath chosen that Way that is most suitable to his own Wisdom, and most connatural to Man's Nature, to lay out before him the Advantages and Disadvantages, and to use these as Motives and Persuasives of his Spirit: For since he hath by his first Creation, implanted in Man's Soul such a Principle as moveth itself upon the Presentation of Good or Evil; that this might not be in vain, he administers all the Dispensations of the Law and Gospel in a Way suitable to that, by propounding such powerful Motives, as may incline and persuade the Heart of Man. It is true, there is a secret *drawing*, withal necessary; they pull off the Father's Arm, and Power of the Holy Ghost; yet that which is visible or sensible to the Soul, is the framing of all Things so, as to engage it upon rational Terms: It is set between two Contraries, *Death* and *Life*, *Death* which it natuaally abhorreth, and *Life* which it naturally loveth: An even Balance is holden up before the Light of the Conscience, in which *Obedience* and *Sin* are weighed, and it is found even to the convincing of the Spirit of Man, that there are as many Disadvantages in the one, as Advantages in the other.

This was the Way that God used first with Man in Paradise, you remember the Terms run so, *what Day thou eats thou shalt die*: He hedged him in on the one Side by *a Promise of Life*, on the other by *a Threatning of Death*: And these two are very rational Restraints, suited to the Soul of Man, and in the inward Principles of it, which are a kind

of Inſtinct to that which is apprehended good or gainful.

Now, this *ver.* runs even ſo in the Form of Words, *If ye live after the Fleſh ye ſhall die.* You ſee this Method is not changed under the Goſpel; for indeed it is natural to the Spirit of Man, and he hath now much more need of all ſuch Perſuaſions, becauſe there is a great Change of Mans Inclination to the worſt Side; all within is ſo diſordered and perverſe, that a thouſand Hedges of perſuaſive Grounds cannot do that which one might have done at firſt: Then they were added out of *Superabundance*, but now out of *Neceſſity*: Then they were ſet about Man to preſerve him in his natural Frame and Inclinations, but now they are needful to change and alter them quite, which is a kind of *Creation*; therefore ſaith *David, create in me a new Spirit*: And therefore the *Goſpel* abounds in Variety of Motives and Inducements, in greater Variety of far more powerful Inducements than the *Law*. Here is that great Perſuaſion taken from the *infinite Gain or Loſs of the Soul of Man*, which if any Thing be able to prevail, this muſt do, ſeeing it is ſeconded with ſome natural Inclination in the Soul of Man to ſeek its own again. Yet there is a Difference between the Nature of ſuch like Promiſes and Threatnings, in the firſt Covenant and in the ſecond: In the firſt Covenant, though Life was freely promiſed; yet it was immediately annexed to perfect Obedience, as a conſequent Reward of it, it was firſtly promiſed unto compleat Righteouſneſs of Mens Perſons: But in the ſecond Covenant, firſtly and principally Life eternal, Grace and Glory is promiſed to Jeſus Chriſt and his Seed, antecedent to any Condition or Qualification upon their Part: And then again, all the Promiſes that run in Way of *Condition*, as *he that believeth ſhall not periſh*, &c. *If ye walk after the Spirit ye ſhall live*; theſe are all the conſequent Fruits of that abſolute gracious Diſpoſition and Reſignation of Grace and Life to them whom Chriſt hath choſen; and ſo their *believing*, and *walking*, and *obeying*, cometh in principally as Parts of the Grace promiſed, and as Witneſſes and Evidences and Confirmations of that Life which is already begun, and will not ſee an End. Beſides that, by Vertue of theſe abſolute Promiſes made to *the Seed of Chriſt*, and Chriſt's compleat Performance of all Conditions in their Name, the Promiſes of Life are made to *Faith* principally, which hath this peculiar Vertue, to carry forth the Soul to another's Righteouſneſs and Sufficiency, and to bottom it upon another: And in the next Place, to *holy Walking*, though mixed with many Infirmities, which Promiſe in the firſt Covenant was only annexed to perfect and abſolute Obedience.

You heard in the preceeding *ver.* a ſtrong Inducement taken from the Bond, Debt and Duty we owe to the Spirit, *to walk after it*, and the want of all Obligation to the Fleſh. Now, if Honeſty and Duty will not ſuffice to perſuade you, as you know in other Things it would do with any honeſt Man, plain Equity is a ſufficient Bond to him; yet conſider what the Apoſtle ſubjoins from the Damage, and from the Advantage which may of it ſelf be the *Topicks* of Perſuaſion, and ſerves to drive in the Nail of Debt and Duty to the Head; if you will not take with this Debt you owe to the Spirit, but ſtill conceive there is ſome greater Obligation lying on you, to care for your Bodies and ſatisfy them; then, I ſay, behold the End of it, what Fruit you muſt one

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Day reap of the Flesh and Service of Sin: *If ye live after the Flesh you shall die*: But then consider the Fruit you shall reap of the Spirit and holy Walking, *you shall live*. It is true, the *Flesh* may flatter you more for the present, but the End of it will be bitter as Death, *amplectitur ut strangulet, the Flesh imbraces you that it may strangle you*; and so if you knew all well, you would not think you owed it any Thing but *Enmity* and *Hatred* and *Mortification*. If your Duty will not move you, let the Love of your selves and your Souls persuade you, for it is an irrepealable Statute, *the Wages of Sin is Death*. Every way you choose to fulfil the Lusts of your Flesh, and to make Provision for it, neglecting the eternal Welfare of your Souls, certainly it shall prove to you *the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, it shall be as the *forbidden Fruit*, which instead of performing that was promised, will bring forth *Death*, the eternal Separation of the Soul from God. *Adam*'s Sin was a *Breviary* or *Epitome* of the multiplyed and enlarged Sins of Mankind: You may see in this *Tragedy* all your Fortunes (so to speak) you may behold in it the flattering Insinuations, and deceitful Promises of Sin and Satan, *who is a Liar and Murderer from the Beginning*, and murdered Man at first by lying to him: You find the Hook covered over with the varnished Bait of an imaginary Life and Happiness: Satisfaction promised to the Eye, to the Taste, and to the Mind: And upon these Inticements, Man bewitched and withdrawn from his God, after these vain and empy Shadows; which when he catched hold upon, he himself was caught and laid hold upon by the Wrath of God, by Death and all the Miseries before it or after it. Now, here is the Map of the World; for all that is in the World, is but a larger Volume of that same kind, *the Lust of the Eyes, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life*! Albeit they have been known and found to be the notablest and grossest Deceivers; and every Man, after he hath spent his Days in Pursuit and Labour for them, he is constrained to acknowledge at length, though too late, that all that is in the World is but an Imposture, a Delusion, a Dream, and worse; yet every Man hearkens after these same Flatteries and Lies, *that hath cast down so many wounded, and made so many strong ones to fall by them*: Every Man trusts the Word and his own Flesh, as if they they were of good Report, and of known Integrity; and this is Mens Misery, that no Man will learn Wisdom upon others Expences, upon the woful and tragical Example of so many others, but go on as confidently now, after the Discovery of these Deceivers, as if this were the first Time they had made such Promises, and used such fair Words to Men. Have they not been these six thousand Years almost deluding the World? And have we not as many Testimonies of their Falshood, as there hath been Persons in all Ages before us? After *Adam* hath tasted of this Tree of Pleasure, and found another Fruit growing on it, that is, *Death*, should the Posterity be so mad, as to be medling still with the *forbidden Tree*, and therefore *forbidden*, because destructive to our selves.

Know then and consider, Beloved in the Lord, that you shall reap no other Thing of all your Labours and Endeavours after the Flesh, all your toiling and perplexing Cares, all your excessive Pains in the making Provision for your Lusts, and caring for the Body only, you shall reap

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no other Harveſt of all, but *Death* and *Corruption*. *Death*, you think, that is a common Lot, and you cannot eſchew it however; nay, but the *Death* here meant is of another Sort, in reſpect of which, you may call *Death*, *Life*: It is the everlaſting Deſtruction of the Soul from the Preſence of God, and the Glory of his Power: It is the falling of that infinite Weight of the Wrath of the Lamb upon you, in reſpect of which, Mountains and Hills will be thought Light, and Men would rather wiſh to be covered with them, *Rev.* vi. 16. Suppoſe now you could ſwim in a River of Delights and Pleaſures; (which yet is given to none, for truly upon a juſt Reckoning, it will be found that the Anxiety and Grief and Bitterneſs that is intermingled with all earthly Delights, ſwallows up the Sweetneſs of them) yet it will but carry you down e're you be aware, into the Sea of *Death* and *Deſtruction*, as the Fiſh that ſwim and ſport for a while in *Jordan*, are carried down into the dead *Sea* of *Sodom*, where they are preſently ſuffocated and extinguiſhed; or as a Malefactor is carried through a pleaſant Palace to the Gallows; ſo Men walk through the Delights of their Fleſh, to their own endleſs Torment and Deſtruction.

Seeing then, my Beloved, that your Sins and Luſts which you are inclined and accuſtomed to, will certainly kill you, if you entertain them; then *Nature it ſelf would teach you* the Law of *Self-defence*, to kill e'er you be killed, to kill *Sin* e'er it kill *you*, to mortify the Deeds and Luſts of the Body, which abound among you, or they will certainly mortify you, that is, make you die. Now, if *Self love* could teach you this, which the Love of God cannot perſuade you to; yet it is well, for being once led unto God, and moved to change your Courſe, upon the Fear and Apprehenſion of the infinite Danger that will enſue: Certainly if you were but a little acquainted with the Sweetneſs of this Life, and Goodneſs of your God, you would find the Power of the former Argument *a debito*, from Debt and Duty, upon your Spirit: Let this once lead you unto God, and you will not want that which will conſtrain you to abide, and never to depart from him.

If you mortify the Deeds of the Body, you ſhall live: As *Sin* decays, *you* increaſe and grow, as Sins die, your Souls live, and it ſhall be a ſure Pledge to you of that eternal Life: And though this be painful and laborious, yet conſider, that it is but the cutting off of a rotten Member, that would corrupt the whole Body, and the Want of it will never maim or mutilate the Body; for you ſhall live perfectly when Sin is perfectly expired and out of Life; and according as Sin is nearer expiring, and nearer the Grave, your Souls are nearer that endleſs Life. If this do not move us, what can be ſaid next? *What ſhall he do more to his Vineyard?*

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SERMON XXXV.

Verſ. 13, 14. *For if ye live after the Fleſh, ye ſhall die: But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.*

THE Life and Being of many Things conſiſts in *Union*; ſeparate them, and they remain not the ſame, or they they looſe their Vertue: It is much more thus in *Chriſtianity*, the Power and Life of it conſiſts in the Union of theſe Things that God hath conjoined, ſo that if any Man pretend to one Thing of it, and neglect the other, he hath really none of them: And to hold to the Subject in Hand, there are three Things, which joined together in the Hearts of Chriſtians, have a great deal of Force: The *Duty* of a Chriſtian, and his *Reward*, and his *Dignity*; his *Work* and *Labour* ſeems hard and unpleaſant, when conſidered alone; but the *Reward* ſweetens it, when it is jointly believed: His *Duty* ſeems too high, and his *Labour* great, yet the Conſideration of the real *Dignity* he is advanced unto, and *Privilege* he has received, will raiſe up the Spirit to great and high Attempts, and to ſuſtain great Labours: Mortification is the *Work* and *Labour*; *Life*, *eternal Life* is the Reward; *following the Spirit* is the Chriſtian's *Duty*, but to be *the Son of God*, that is his *Dignity*.

Mortification ſounds very harſh at firſt: The Hearts of Men ſay, *It is a hard Saying, who can bear it.* And indeed I cannot deny but it is ſo to our corrupt Nature; and therefore ſo holden out in Scripture; the Words choſen to preſs it, expreſs much Pain and Pains, much Torment and Labour: It is not ſo eaſy and trivial a Buſineſs to forſake Sin, or ſubdue it, as many think, who only think it eaſy, becauſe they have never tried it. It is a Circumciſion of the Fore-skin of the Heart, and you know how it diſabled a whole City, *Gen.* xxxiv. and how it enraged the Heart of a tender Mother, *Exod.* iv. 26. It is the Inciſion or cutting off a Member, and theſe the moſt dear and precious, be it the right Hand or right Foot, which is a living Death, as it were, even to kill a Man while he is alive. It is a new Birth, and the Pains and Throws of the Birth are known. *Regeneration* certainly hath a travelling Pain within it, in ſo much that *Paul* travelled in Pain till it were accompliſhed in theſe, *Gal.* iv. 19. Though Men conceive Sin in Pleaſure, yet they cannot be rid of that deadly Burden without Throws

and

and Pains: And to half this Work, or to be remiss or negligent in it, is as foolish and unwise, as for a *Child to stay long in the Place of breaking forth*, as the Lord complains of *Ephraim*, Hos. xiii. 13. *He is an unwise Son, for he should not stay long in the Place of breaking forth of Children.* It is one of the greatest Follies, not to labour by all Means to be rid of the Incumbrances of Sin. Much Violence offered to it, and a total Resignation of our selves to God, may be great Pain, but it is short Pain; then the Pleasure is greater and continues: But now Christians lengthen their Pain, and draw out their Cross and Vexation to a great Extent, because they deal negligently in the Business, they suffer the *Canaanites* to live, and these are *Thorns and Briers in their Sides continually. Then this Business* is called *Mortification*, as the Word is here, and *Col.* iii. 5. which imports a higher Degree of Pain, for the Agonies of Death are terrible; and to hold it out yet more, the most painful and lingering kind of Death is chosen to express it, *Crucifixion*, Gal. v. 24. Now indeed, that which makes the forsaking of Sin so grievous to Flesh and Blood, is, the Engagements of the Soul to it, the *Oneness* that is between it and our Natures, as they are now fallen; For you know Pain ariseth upon the Dissolution or Division of any Thing that is continued or united; and these Things that are so nearly conjoined, it is hard to separate them without much Violence. And truly as the Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, so we must offer Violence to our selves, to our Lusts and Inclinations, who are almost our selves: And if you would be truly Christians, this must be your Business and Imployment, to cut off these Things that are dearest unto you, to cast out the very Idols your Hearts sacrifice unto: And if there be any Thing more *one* with you than another, to endeavour to break the Bond with that, and to be at the furthest Distance with it: It is easy to persuade Men to forsake some Sins and Courses, that they are not much inclined to, and find not much Pleasure or Profit by them: You may do that and be but dead in Sins; but if you aim at *true Mortification indeed*, you would consider what are the chief Idols and predominant Inclinations of your Heart, and as to set your self impartially against all known Sin, so particularly against the most beloved Sin, because it interrupts most the Communion of God, and separates from your Beloved, and the dearer it be, the more dangerous certainly it is.

But to encourage and hearten you to this, I would have you look back to that former Victory that Christ hath gained in our Name, and look about you to the Assistance you have for the present, the Spirit to help you. Truly, my Beloved, this will be a dead Business, if you be not animated and quickned by these Considerations, that Christ died to Sin, and lived to God, and that in this he was a publick Person representing you, that so you may conclude with *Paul, I am crucified with Christ*, Gal. ii. 20. *We are buried with him by Baptism into his Death*, Rom. vi. 4. Consider that mystical Union with Christ crucified and Life shall spring out of his Cross, out of his Grave to kill Sin in you. That the great Business is done already, and Victory gained in our Head, *this is our Victory, even Faith.* Believe, and then you have overcome, before you overcome; and this will help you to overcome in your own Persons. And then consider and look round about to the strong Helper you have,

have, *the Spirit, if you through the Spirit mortify*, &c. Stronger is he that is in you, than he that is in the World; though he does not vent all his Power to you; yet you may believe that there is a secret latent Vertue in the Seed of Grace, that it cannot be wholly overcome or conquered, and there is one engaged in the Warfare with us, who will never leave us nor forsake us, who of set Purpose withdraweth his Help now and then, to discover our Weakness to us, that we may cleave the faster to him, who never letteth Sin get any Power, or gather any Strength, but out of Wisdom to make the final Victory the more glorious; in a Word, he leads us through Weaknesses, Infirmities, Faintings, Wrestlings, that his Strength may be perfected in Weakness, *that when we are weak, then we may be strongest in him*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. Our Duty then is to follow this Spirit wheresoever he leadeth us: Christ, the Captain our Salvation, when he went to Heaven, he sent the Spirit to be our Guider, to lead us thither where he is; and therefore we should resign, and give up our selves to his Guidance and Direction. The Nature of a Creature is *Dependence*, so the very Essence of a Christian consists in Dependence and Subordination to the Spirit of God. Nature itself would teach them that want Wisdom, to commit themselves to these that have it, and not to carry the Reins of their own Life themselves.

Truly, not only the Sense of our own Imperfection, of our Folly and Ignorance in these Things that belong to Life, should make us willing to yield our selves over to the Spirit of God, as blind Men to their Leader, as Children to their Nurses, as Orphans to their Tutors; but also, because the Spirit is made our Tutor and Leader: Christ our Father hath left us to the Spirit in his Latter-will; and therefore as we have absolute Necessity, so he he hath both Willingness and Ability, because it is his Office. *O Lord, I know*, saith Jeremiah, *the Way of Man is not in himself, it is not in him that walketh to direct his Steps*, Jer. x. 23. O! it were a great Point of Wisdom, thus to know our Ignorance and Folly, and this is the great Qualification of Christ's Disciples, simple as Children, as little Children, as void of Conceit of their own Wisdom, *Mark* x. 15. And this alone capacitates the Soul to receive the Impressions of Wisdom; as an empty Table is fittest to write upon, so a Soul emptied of it self: Whereas *Self-conceit* draweth a Number of foolish senseless Draughts in the Mind, that it cannot receive the true Image of Wisdom. This then, when a Soul finds that it hath misled it self, being misguided by the Wild-fire of its Lusts, and hath hardly escaped perishing and falling head long in the Pit, this disposes the Soul to a willing Resignation of it self, to one wiser and powerfuller, *the Spirit of God*; and so he giveth the Spirit the String of his Affections and Judgment to lead him by, and he walketh willingly in that Way to eternal Life, since his Heart was enlarged with so much Knowledge and Love; and now having given up your selves thus, you would carefully eye your Leader, and attend all his Motions, that you may conform your self to them: Whensoever the Spirit pulleth you by the Heart, draweth at your Conscience, to drive you to Prayer, or any such Duty, do not resist that Pull, do not quench the Spirit, lest he let you alone, and do not call you, nor speak to you. If you fall out thus with your Leader, then you must guide your selves;

and truly you will guide it into the Pit, if left to your ſelves; therefore make much of all the Impulſes of your Conſcience, of all the Touches and inward Motions of Light and Affection, to entertain theſe, and draw them forth in Meditation and Action, for theſe are nothing elſe, but the *Spirit your Leader* plucking at you to follow him, and if you ſit when he riſeth to walk, if you neglect ſuch Warnings, then you may grieve him, and this cannot but in the end be Bitterneſs to you. Certainly, many Chriſtians are guilty in this, and prejudge themſelves of the preſent Comfort and Benefit of this inward anointing, that teacheth all Things, and of this Boſom-guide that leadeth in all Truth; becauſe they are ſo heavy and lumpiſh to be led after him: They drive ſlowly, and take very much Preſſure and Perſuaſion to any Duty; whereas we ſhould accuſtom our ſelves to willing and ready Obedience upon the leaſt Signification of his Mind: Yea, and which is worſe, we often reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt; he draweth, and we hold beloved Sins, he pulleth, and we pull back from the moſt ſpiritual Duties; there is ſo much Perverſneſs and Frowardneſs yet in our Natures, that there needs the almighty Draught of his Arm, to make it ſtraight, as there is need of infinite Grace to pardon it.

Now, my Beloved, if you have in your Deſires and Affections reſigned your ſelves over to the Guidance of this *Spirit*, and this be your real and ſincere Endeavour to follow it, and in far as you are carried back, or contrary, by Temptation and Corruption, or retarded in your Motion, it is your Lamentation before the Lord; I ſay unto you, chear your Hearts, and lift them up in the Belief of this Privilege conferred upon you, *you are the Sons of God*: For he giveth this *Tutor* and *Pedagogue* to none but to his own Children, *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.* Suppoſe you cannot exactly follow his Motions, but are often driven out, or turned back; yet hath not the *Spirit* the Hold of your Heart? Are you not detained by the Cord of your Judgment, and the Law of your Mind? And is there not ſome Chain faſtened about you, which maketh it out-ſtrip the Practice, by Deſires and Affections? *You are the Sons of God*, that is truly the greateſt Dignity, and higheſt Privilege, in Reſpect of which, all Relations may bluſh, and hide their Faces: What are all the ſplendid and gliſtering Titles among Men, but empty Shows, and evaniſhing Sounds, in reſpect of this: To be called the Son of a Gentleman, of a Nobleman, of a King, how much do the Sons of Men pride themſelves in it? But truly, that putteth no *intrinſick Dignity* in the Perſons themſelves, it is a miſerable Poverty to borrow Praiſe from another; and truly he that boaſts of his Parentage, *aliena laudat non ſua, he praiſeth that which is anothers not his own.* But this Dignity, it is truly a Dignity, it puts *intrinſick Worth* in the Perſon, and puts a more excellent Spirit in them, than that which is in the World, as is ſaid of *Caleb*: And beſides it intitles to the greateſt Happineſs imaginable.

SER-

SERMON XXXVI.

Verse 14, 15. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear*, &c.

CHildren do commonly resemble their Parents, not only in the outward Proportion and Feature of their Countenances, but also in the Disposition and Temper of their Spirits; and generally they are inclined to imitate the Customs and Carriage of their Parents; so that they sometimes may be accounted the very living Images of such Persons, and in them Men are thought to out-live themselves. Now indeed, they that are the *Sons of God*, are known by this Character, that *they are led by the Spirit of God*: And there is the more Necessity, and the more Reason too, of this Resemblance of God, and Imitation of him in his Children; because that very divine Birth that they have from Heaven, consists in the Renovation of their Natures, and Assimilation to the divine Nature; and therefore they are possessed with an inward Principle, that carries them powerfully towards a Conformity with their heavenly Father; and it becometh their great Study and Endeavour to *observe* all the Dispositions and Carriage of their heavenly Father, which are so honourable and high, and suitable to himself, that they at least may breathe and halt after the Imitation of him. Therefore our Lord exhorts us, and taketh a domestick Example, and familiar Patern to persuade us the more by, *Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*, Matth. v. 48. And there is one Perfection he especially recommends for our Imitation, *Mercifulness and Compassion* towards Men, opposed to the *Violence*, *Fury*, and *Implacableness*, to the *Oppression* and *Revenge*, and *Hatred* that abounds among Men, *Luke* vi. 36. And generally, in all his Ways of *Holiness* and *Purity*, of *Goodness* and *Mercy*, we ought to be Followers of him, as dear Children, who are not only obliged by the common Law of Sympathy between Parents and Children; but moreover engaged by the tender Affection that he carrieth to us, *Eph.* v. 1. Now, because God is high as Heaven, and his Way and Thoughts and Dispositions are infinitely above us, the Pattern seems to be so far out of Sight, that it is given over as desperate by many to attempt any Conformity to it; therefore it hath pleased the Lord to put his own Spirit within his own Children, to be a Bosom-pattern and Example: And 'tis our Duty to resign our selves to his lead-

Leading and Direction: The Spirit brings the Copy near hand us, and though we cannot attain, yet we ſhould follow after; though we cannot make out the Leſſon, yet we ſhould be ſcribling at it; and the more we exerciſe our ſelves this Way, ſetting the Spirit's Direction before our Eyes, the more perfect ſhall we be.

It is high Time indeed to pretend to this, to be a *Son* or a *Daughter of God*: 'Tis a higher Word than if a Man could deduce his Genealogy from an uninterrupted Line of a thouſand Kings and Princes; there is more Honour, true Honour in it, and more Profit too, 'tis that which enriches the pooreſt, and ennobles the baſeſt, inconceivably beyond all the imaginary Degrees of Men. Now, my Beloved, this is the great Deſign of the Goſpel, to beſtow this incomparable Privilege upon you, *to become the Sons of God*. But it is ſad to think how many Souls ſcarce think upon it, and how many delude themſelves in it: But conſider, that *as many as are the Sons of God, are led by the Spirit of God*, they have gotten a new Leader and Guider, other than their own Fancy or Humour, which once they followed in the Ignorance of their Hearts. It is lamentable to conceive how the moſt Part of us are acted, and driven, and carried head-long, rather than gently led, by our own carnal and corrupt Inclinations; Men pretending to Chriſtianity, yet hurried away with every ſelf-pleaſing Object, as if they were not Maſters of themſelves, furiouſly agitated by violent Luſts, miſcarried continually againſt the very Dictates of their own Reaſon and Conſcience. And I fear there is too much of theſe, even in thoſe who have more Reaſon to aſſume this honourable Title of *Son-ſhip*. I know not how we are exceedingly addicted to ſelf-pleaſing in every Thing, whatſoever our Fancy or Inclination ſuggeſts to us, that we muſt do without more Bands, if it be not directly ſinful whatſoever we apprehend, that we muſt vent and ſpeak it out, tho' to little or no Edification; like that of *Solomon*, *We deny our Hearts nothing they deſire*, except the Groſſneſs of it reſtrain us. Now, certainly if we knew what we are called to, who are the *Sons of God*, we could not but diſingage more with our ſelves, even in lawful Things, and give over the Conduct of our Hearts and Ways to the *Spirit of our Father*, whom we may be perſuaded of, that he will lead us in the Ways of Pleaſantneſs and Peace.

Now, the ſpecial and peculiar Operations of the Spirit, are expreſſed in the following Words: There are ſome Workings of the Spirit of God that are but introductory and ſubſervient to more excellent Works; and therefore they are tranſient, not appointed to continue long, for they are not his great Intendment; of this kind are theſe terrible Repreſentations of Sin and Wrath, of the Juſtice of God, which puts the Soul in a Fear, a trembling Fear; and while ſuch a Soul is kept within the Apprehenſion of Sin and Judgment, 'tis ſhut up, as it were, in Bondage. Now, though it be true, that in the Converſion of a Sinner, there is always ſomething of this in more or leſs Degrees: yet becauſe this is not the great Deſign of the Goſpel, to put Men in Fear, but rather to give them Confidence; nor the great Intendment of God in the Diſpenſation of the Law, to bring a Soul in Bondage under Terror, but rather by the Goſpel to free them from that Bondage; therefore he hath Reaſon to expreſs it thus, *ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear*, &c. But there are other Operations of the Spirit,

Spirit, which are chiefly intended, and principally bestowed, as the great Gift of our *Father*, to express his Bounty and Goodness towards us; and from these he is called the *Spirit of Adoption*, and the *Spirit of Intercession*. The *Spirit of Adoption*, not only in regard of that Witness-bearing and Testification to our Consciences of God's Love and Favour, and our Interest in it, as in the next *Ver.* but also in regard of that Child-like Disposition of Reverence and Love and Respect that he begets in our Hearts towards God, as our Father: And from both these flows this next working, *crying*, *Abba, Father*, aiding and assisting us in presenting our Necessities to our Father, making this the continued Vent of the Heart in all Extremities, to pour out all that burthens us in our Father's Bosom: And this gives marvellous Ease to the Heart, and releases it from the Bondage of Carefulness and Anxiety, which it may be subject to, after the Soul is delivered from the Fear and Bondage of Wrath.

Let us speak then to these in order: The first working of the Spirit is, *to put a Man in Fear of himself*, and such a Fear as mightily straitens and embondages the Soul of Man: And this, though in it self it be neither so pleasant nor excellent, as to make it come under the Notion of any Gift from God, it having rather the Nature of a Torment and Punishment, and being some Sparkle of Hell already kindled in the Conscience; yet, hath made it beautiful and seasonable in its Use and End, because he makes it to usher in the pleasant and refreshing Sight of a *Saviour*, and the Report of God's Love to the World in him. It is true, all Men are in Bondage to Sin and Satan, and shut up in the Darkness of Ignorance and Unbelief, and bound in the Fetters of their own Lusts, which are as the Chains that are put about Malefactors before they go to Prison, *He that commits Sin is a Servant of Sin*, Joh. viii. 34. And to be a Servant of Sin, is Slavery under the most cruel Tyrant: All these Things are, yet how few Souls do apprehend it seriously, or are weary of their Prison? How few groan to be delivered? Nay, the most part account it only *Liberty*, to hate true Delivery as Bondage. But some there are, whose Eyes the Spirit of God opens, and lets them see their Bondage and Slavery, and how they are concluded under the most heavy and weighty Senentce that ever was pronounced, the Curse and Wrath of the ever living God, that there is no Way to flie from it, or escape it, for any Thing they can do or know. Now indeed, this serious Discovery cannot choose but make the Heart of a Man to tremble, as *David, my Heart trembles because of thy Judgments, and I am afraid of thee*, Psal. cxix. 120. Such a serious Representation will make the stoutest and proudest Heart to fall down, and faint for Fear of that infinite intollerable Weight of deserved Wrath, and then the Soul is in a sensible Bondage, that before was in a real, but insensible Bondage; then 'tis inviroued about with bitter Accusations, with dreadful Challenges, then the Law of God arrests and confines the Soul within the Bounds of its own accusing Conscience; and this is some previous Representation of that eternal Imprisonment and Banishment from the Presence of God. Albeit many of you are free from this Fear, and enjoy a kind of Liberty to serve your own Lusts, and are not sensible of any Thraldom of your Spirits; yet certainly the Lord will sometime arrest you, and bring you to this spiritual

Bondage

Bondage, when he ſhall make the Iniquities of your Heels encompaſs you about, and the Curſes of his Law ſurround you: When your Conſcience accuſeth, and God condemneth, it may be too late, and out of Date.

Alas then! What will you do, who now put your Conſcience by, and will not hearken to it, or be put in Fear by any Thing can be repreſented to you: We do not deſire to put you in Fear, where no Fear is; but where there is infinite Cauſe of Fear, and when it is poſſible that *Fear* may introduce *Faith*, and be the Forerunner of theſe glad Tidings that will compoſe the Soul: We deſire only you may know what Bondage you are really into, whether it be obſerved or not, that you may *fear*, leſt you be enthralled in the Chains of everlaſting Darkneſs, and ſo may be perſuaded to flee from it before it be irrcoverable. What a vain and empty Sound is the Goſpel of Liberty by a *Redeemer*, to the moſt Part who do not feel their Bondage? *Who believes its Report*, or cares much for it? Becauſe it is Neceſſity that caſts a Beauty and Luſtre upon it, or takes the Scales off our Eyes, and opens our cloſed Ears.

Now for you, who either are, or have been detained in this Bondage, under the fearful Apprehenſion of the Wrath of God, and the ſad Remembrance of your Sins, know that this is not the prime Intent, and grand Buſineſs to torment you, as it were, before the Time; there is ſome other more beautiful and ſatisfying Structure to be raiſed out of this Foundation: I would have you improve it thus, to commend the Neceſſiy, the abſolute Neceſſity of a *Redeemer*, and to make him beautiful in your Eyes. Do not dwell upon that, as if it were the ultimate or laſt Work, but know that you are called in this rational Way to come out of your ſelves into this glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, purchaſed by Chriſt, and revealed in the Goſpel. Know *you have not received the Spirit of Bondage only to Fear*, but to drive you to Faith in a Saviour; and then you ought ſo to walk, as not to return to that former Thraldom of the *Fear of Wrath*, but believe his *Love*.

SER-

SERMON XXXVII.

Verſe 14, 15. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear: But ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

THE Life of *Chriſtianity*, take it in it ſelf, it is the moſt pleaſant and joyful Life that can be, exempted from theſe Fears and Cares, theſe Sorrows and Anxieties, that all other Lives are ſubject unto; for this of Neceſſity muſt be the Force and Efficacy of true Religion, if it be indeed true to its Name, to disburden and eaſe the Heart, and fill it with all manner of Conſolation. Certainly it is the moſt rich Subject, and moſt compleatly furniſhed with all Variety of Delights to entertain a Soul, that can be imagined: Yet, I muſt confeſs, while we conſult with the Experience and Practice of Chriſtians, this bold Aſſertion ſeems to be much weakned, and too much Ground is given to confirm the contrary Miſapprehenſions of the World, who take it to be a ſullen, melancholick, and diſconſolate Life, attended with many Fears and Sorrows. It is, alas! too evident, that many Chriſtians are kept in Bondage, almoſt all their Life-time, through Fear of eternal Death, how many diſmal Repreſentations of Sin and Wrath, in the Souls of ſome Chriſtians, which keep them in much Thraldom? At leaſt, who is it that is not once and often brought in Bondage after Converſion, and made to apprehend fearfully their own Eſtate, who hath ſuch conſtant uninterrupted Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, or lyes under ſuch direct Beams of divine Favour, but it is ſometimes ecclipſed, and their Souls filled with the Darkneſs of Horrour and Terrour? And truly the moſt part taſte not ſo much Sweetneſs in Religion, as makes them unceſſant and unwearied in the Ways of Godlineſs: Yet notwithſtanding of all this, we muſt vindicate *Chriſtianity* it ſelf, and not impute theſe Things unto it, which are the Infirmities and Faults of the Followers of it, who do not improve it unto ſuch an Uſe, or uſe it ſo far as in it ſelf it is capable. Indeed, it is true that often we are brought to fear again, yet withall it is certain, that our Allowance is larger, and that we *have received the Spirit, not to put us in Bondage again to fear*, but rather to ſeal to our Hearts that

Love

Love of God, which may not only expel Fear, but bring in Joy. I wish that this were deeply considered by all of us, that there is such a Life as this attainable; that the Word of God doth not deceive us in promising fair Things, which it cannot perform, but that there is a certain Reality in the Life of *Christianity*, in that Peace and Joy, Tranquility and Serenity of Mind that is holden out, and that some have really found it, and do find it; and that the Reason why as all of us do not find it in Experience, is not because it is not, but because we have so little Apprehension of it, and Diligence after it. It is strange, that all Men who have pursued Satisfaction in the Things of this Life, being disappointed, and one Generation witnessing this to another, and one Person to another, that notwithstanding, Men are this Day as fresh in the Pursuit of that, as big in the Expectations as ever: And yet in this Business of Religion, and the Happiness to be found in it, though the Oracles of God in all Ages have testified from Heaven how certain and possible it is, though many have found it in Experience, and left on Record to others; yet there is so slender Belief of the Reality and Certainty of it, and so slack Pursuit of it, as if we did not believe it at all. Truly, my Beloved, there is a great Mistake in this, and 'tis generally too: All Men apprehend other Things more feasable and attainable than personal Holiness and Happiness in it; but truly, I conceive there is nothing in the World so practicable as this, nothing made so easie, so certain to a Soul that really minds it.

Let us take it so then, the Fau't is not Religion's, that these who profess it are subject to so much Fear and Care, and disquieted with so much Sorrow; it is rather because Christianity doth not sink into the Hearts and Souls of Men, but only puts a Tincture on their Out-side, or because the Faith of divine Truths is so superficial, and the Consideration of them so slight, that they cannot have much Efficacy and Influence on the Heart, to quiet and compose it. Is it any Wonder that some Souls be subject again to the Bondage of Fear and Terror, when they do not stand in Aw to Sin? Much Liberty to Sin, will certainly embondage the Spirit of a Christian to fear. Suppose a Believer in Jesus Christ be exempted from the Hazard of Condemnation; yet he is the greatest Fool in the World that would on that Account venture on Satisfaction to his Lusts; for though it be true that he be not in Danger of eternal Wrath, yet he may find so much present Wrath in his Conscience, as may make him think it was a foolish Bargain; he may lose so much of the Sweetness of the Peace and Joy of God, as all the Pleasures of Sin cannot compense: Therefore to the End that you whose Souls are once pacified by the Blood of Christ, and composed by his Word of Promise, may enjoy that constant Rest and Tranquillity, as not to be entraled again to your old Fears and Terrors, I would advise and recommend to you these two Things; *one is*, that ye would be much in the Study of that Allowance which the Promises of Christ afford: Be much in the serious Apprehension of the Gospel, and certainly your Doubts and Fears would evanish, at one Puff of such a rooted and established Meditation. Think what you are called to, *not to fear again*, but to love rather, and honour him as a Father: *and then* take heed to walk suitably, and preserve your Seal of Adoption unblotted, unrusted: You would

study

ſtudy ſo to walk, as you may not caſt Dirt upon it, or open any Gap in the Conſcience for the Re-entry of theſe helliſh-like Fears, and dreadful Apprehenſions of God. Certainly 'tis impoſſible to preſerve the *Spirit* in Freedom, if a Man be not watchful againſt Sin and Corruption. *David* prays, *Re-eſtabliſh me with thy free Spirit*; as if his Spirit had been abaſed, embondaged, and enthraled by the Power of that Corruption. If you would have your Spirits kept free from the Fear of Wrath, ſtudy to keep them free from the Power of Sin, for that is but a Fruit of this: And 'tis moſt ſuitable that the Soul that cares not to be in Bondage to ſinful Luſts, ſhould, by the Righteouſneſs of God, tempered with Love and Wiſdom, be brought under the Bondage he would not, that is, of Fear and Terrour; for by this Means the Lord makes him know how evil the firſt is, by the Bitterneſs of the ſecond.

It is uſual on ſuch a Scripture as this, to propound many Queſtions, and debate many practical Caſes; as, whether a Soul, after believing, can be under legal Bondage? And wherein theſe differ, the Bondage of a Soul after believing, and in its firſt Converſion? And how far that Bondage of Fear is preparatory to Faith? And many ſuch like; but I chooſe rather to hold forth the ſimple and naked Truth for your Edification, than put you upon, or intertain you in ſuch needleſs Janglings and Contentions. All I deſire to ſay to a Soul in Bondage, is, to exhort him to come to the Redeemer, and to conſider that his Caſe calls and cries for a Delivery: Come, I ſay, and he ſhall find Reſt and Liberty to his Soul. All I would ſay to Souls delivered from this Bondage, is, to requeſt and beſeech them to live in a holy Fear of Sin, and Jealouſy over themſelves, that ſo they may not be readily brought under the Bondage of the Fear of Wrath again. Perfect Love caſts out the Fear of Hell, but perfect Love brings in the Fear of Sin: *Ye that love the Lord hate Ill*; and if ye hate it, ye will fear it in this State of Infirmity and Weakneſs, wherein we are. And if at any Time ye, through Negligence and Careleſſneſs of walkining, loſe the comfortable Evidence of the Father's Love, and be reduced again to your old Priſon of legal Terror, do not deſpair for that, do not think that ſuch a Thing could not befall a Child of God, and from that Ground do not raze former Foundations; for the Scripture ſaith not, that whoſoever believes once in Chriſt, and receives the Spirit of Adoption, cannot fear again; for we ſee it otherwiſe in *David*, in *Heman*, in *Job*, &c. all holy Saints; but the Scripture ſaith, *ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage for that End* to fear again: It is not the Allowance of your Father; your Allowance is better and larger, if you knew it, and did not ſit below it.

Now, the great Gift, and large Allowance of our *Father*, is expreſſed in the next Words, *But ye have received the Spirit of Adoption*, &c. Which *Spirit of Adoption* is a *Spirit of Interceſſion*, to make us cry to God as our Father. Theſe are two Gifts, *Adoption* or the *Privilege of Sons*, and the *Spirit of Adoption* revealing the Love and Mercy of God to the Heart, and framing it to a Soul-like Diſpoſition: Compare the two Statestogether, and its a marvelous Change: A *Rebel* condemned, and then *pardoned*, and then *adopted to be a Son of God*: A *Sinner* under Bondage, a *bound Slave* to Sin and Satan, not only freed from that intolerable Bondage, but advanced to this Liberty, to be made a *Son of God*,

this will be the continued Wonder of Eternity, and that whereabout the Song of Angels and Saints will be. Accurſed Rebels, expecting nothing but preſent Death, Sinners arraigned and ſentenced before his Tribunal, and already taſting Hell in their Conſciences, and in Fear of eternal periſhing, not only to be delivered from all that, but to be dignified with this Privilege to be the *Sons of God*: To be taken from the Gibbet, to be crowned, that is the great Myſtery of Wiſdom and Grace revealed in the Goſpel, the proclaiming whereof will be the joynt Labour of all the innumerable Companies above for all Eternity. Now, if you ask how this Eſtate is attainable, himſelf tells us, *John* i. 12. *As many as believed or received him, to them he gave the Privilege to be the Sons of God.* The Way is made plain and eaſy, Chriſt the Son of God, the natural and eternal Son of God, became the Son of Man; to facilitate this, he hath taken on the Burden of Man's Sin, the Chaſtiſement of our Peace; and ſo of the glorious Son of God he became like the wretched and accurſed Sons of Men; and therefore God hath proclaimed in the Goſpel, not only an Immunity and Freedom from Wrath, to all that in the Senſe of their own Miſery, cordially receive him, as he is offered; but the unſpeakable Privilege of *Sonſhip* and Adoption for his Sake who became our elder Brother, *Gal.* iv. 4, 5. Men that want Children uſe to ſupply their Want by *adopting* ſome beloved Friend in the Place of a Son; and this is a kind of Supply of Nature for the Comfort of them that want: But it is ſtrange, that God having a Son ſo glorious, the very Character of his Perſon, and Brightneſs of his Glory, in whom he delighted from Eternity; ſtrange, I ſay, that he ſhould in a manner loſe and give away his only begotten Son, that he might by his Means adopt others, poor deſpicable Creatures, yea rebellious, to be his Sons and Daughters! Certainly, this is an Act infinitely tranſcending Nature, ſuch an Act that hath an unſearchable Myſtery in it, into which Angels deſire to look, and never ceaſe looking, becauſe they never ſee the Bottom of it. It was not out of Indigency he did it, not for any need he had of us, or Comfort expected from us, but abſolutely for our Neceſſity and Conſolation, that he might have upon whom to pour the Riches of his Grace.

SERMON XXXVIII.

Verſe 15. — *But ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

BEHOLD what Manner of Love the Father hath ſhewed unto us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God, 1 John iii. 1. It is a wonderful Expreſſion of Love, to advance his own Creatures, not only infinitely below himſelf

self, but far below other Creatures, to such a *Dignity*. *Lord what is Man that thou so magnifiest him!* but it surpasses Wonder, that *rebellious Creatures*, his *Enemies*, should have, not only their Rebellions freely pardoned, but this Privilege of *Sonship* bestowed upon them; that he should take *Enemies*, and make *Sons* of them; and not only *Sons*, but *Heirs, Co-heirs with his own only begotten Son.* And then, how he makes them Sons, is as wonderful as the Thing it self, that he should make his *own Son, our Brother, Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh*; and make him spring out as a Branch or Rod out of the dry Stem of *Jesse*, who himself was the Root of all Mankind. This is the Way, *God sent his Son, made of a Woman, under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons*, Gal. iv. 5. The House of Heaven marries with the Earth, with them who have their Foundation in the Dust; the chief Heir of that heavenly Family, joineth in kindred with our base and obscure Family, and by this means, we are made of Kin to God. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus*, 1 Cor. i. 30. It behoved Christ, in a manner, to lose his own *Sonship* as to Men, to have it so vailed and darkned by the superadded Interest in us, and his Nearness to us; he was so properly a *Son of Man*, subject to all human Infirmities, except *Sin*, that without Eyes of Faith, Men could not perceive that he was the *Son of God*: And by this wonderful Exchange are we made the Sons of God: Whoever, in the Apprehension of their own Enmity and Distance from God, receive Christ Jesus, offered as the Peace, the Bond of Union between the two Families of Heaven and Earth, that were at an infinite Odds and Distance; whoever (I say) believes thus in him, and flies to him, desiring to lay down the Weapons of their Warfare, their Peace is not only made by that Marriage which Christ made with our Nature, but they are blessed with this Power and Privilege, to be the *Sons and Daughters of the Most High*: And from thence you may conclude, that if God be your *Father*, you can want nothing that is good: But the Determination of what is good for you, whether in spiritual Enlargements, or in the Things of this Life, you must refer to his Wisdom: For his Love indeed is strong as Death, nothing can quench it, in the Point of Reality and Constancy: There is nothing to shadow it out among Men; the Love of Women is earnest and vehement, but that is nothing to it, *Isa.* xlix. 15. *For they may forget, but he cannot.* Yet his Love is not a foolish Dotage, like Man that is often miscarried with Fancy and Lust, but it is a rational and wise Affection, administred and expressed with infinite Reason, and Wisdom: And therefore, he chooses rather to profit us, than to please us in his Dealings, and we who are not so fit to judge and discern our own *Good*, should commit all to his fatherly and wise Providence. Therefore, if you be tempted to Anxiety and Carefulness of Mind, either through the Earthliness of your Dispositions, or the present Straits of the Time, you who have resigned your self to Jesus Christ, would call to Mind that your heavenly Father careth for you; And what need you care too? Why not, use your lawful Callings, be diligent in them; this is not to prejudge that, but if you believe in God, then you are obliged by that Profession to abate from the superfluous tormenting Thoughtfulness, that is good for nothing, but to make you more miserable than your Troubles can

make you, and to make you miserable before you be miserable, to anticipate your Sorrows. If you say God is your *Father*, you are tyed to devolve your selves over on him, and trust in his good Will and Faithfulness, and to sit down quietly as Children that have Parents to provide for them.

Now, the other Gift is great too, *the Spirit of Adoption, and because ye are Sons, therefore hath he given you the Spirit of his Son* saith this Apostle, Gal. iv. 6. And so it is a Kind of Consectary of the great Privilege and blessed Estate of Adoption. They who adopt Children, use to give them some kind of Token to express their Love to them: But as the Lord is higher than all, and this Privilege *to be his Son or Child* is the greatest Dignity imaginable, so this Gift of his Spirit suits the Greatness and Glory and Love of our *Father*. It is a Father's Gift indeed, a Gift suitable to our heavenly *Father*. If a Father that is tender of the Education of his Child, and would desire nothing so much as that he might be of a vertuous and gracious Disposition, and good Ingine; I think if he were to express his Love in one Wish, it would be this, that he might have such a Spirit in him, and this he would account better than all that he could leave him: But if it were possible to transmit a gracious, well-disposed and understanding Spirit from one to another, and if Men could leave it, as they do their Inheritance to their Children, certainly a wise and religious Parent would first make over a Disposition of that to his Children; as *Elisha sought a double Measure of Elijah's Spirit*, so a Father would wish such a Measure to his Children, and, if it were possible, to give it: But that may not be, all that can be done is to wish well to them, and leave them a good Example for Imitation: But in this our heavenly *Father* transcends all, that he can impart his own *Spirit* to his adopted Children, and this *Spirit* is in a manner the very essential Principle that maketh them Children of the *Father*; their Natures, their Dispositions are under his Power, he can as well reform them, as you can change your Childrens Garments: He can make of us what he will, our Hearts are in his Hand, as the Water, capable of any Impression he pleaseth to put on it: And this is the Impression he putteth on his Children, he putteth his *Spirit* in their Hearts, and writeth his Law in their inward Parts, a more divine and higher Work, than all human Perswasion can reach. This *Spirit* they receive as an Earnest of the Inheritance, and withal, to make them fit for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

Now, the working of this *Spirit of Adoption*, I conceive to be *threefold*, beside that of *Intercession*, expressed in the *Verse*. *The first Work of the Spirit of Adoption*, that wherein a Father's Affection seems to break first from under Ground, is, the revealing to the Heart, the Love and Mercy of God to Sinners; I do not say, to such a Soul in particular, for that Application is neither first, nor universal: But herein the *Spirit of Adoption* first appears from under the Cloud of Fear; and this is the first Opening of the Prison of Bondage, wherein a Soul was shut, when the plain Way of Reconciliation to God in Christ, and Delivery from the Bondage of Sin and Wrath, is holden out; when such a Word as this comes into the Soul, and is received with some Gladness, *God so loved the World, that he gave his Son*, &c. *This is a true and faithful saying*, &c. *Come ye that labour and are weary, and I will give rest to your Souls:*

Souls: When a Soul is made to hear the glad Tidings of Liberty preached to Captives, of Light to the blind, of Joy to the heavy in Spirit, of Life to the Dead; though he cannot come that length as to see his own particular Interest, yet the very receiving affectionately and greedily such a general Report as good and true, gives some Ease and Relaxation to the Heart. To see Delivery possible, is some Door of Hope to a desperate Sinner; but to see it, and espy more than a *Possibility*, even *great Probability*, though he cannot reach a Certainty, that will be as the breaking open of a Window of Light in a dark Dungeon, it will be as the taking off of some of the hardest Fetters, and the worst Chains, which makes a Man almost to think himself at Liberty. Now this is the great Office of the *Spirit of the Father*, to beget in us good Thoughts of him, to incline us to charitable and favourable Constructions of him, and make us ready to think well of him, to begat a good Understanding between us and him, and correct our jealous Misapprehensions of him; for certainly we are naturally suspicious of God, that he deals not in sad earnest with us: When ever we see the Height of our Provocation, and Weight of deserved Indignation, we think him like our selves, and can hardly receive without Suspicion, the Gospel that lays open his Love in Christ to the World.

Now, this is the Spirit's Work, to make us certain that honourable Thought of God, that he is most inclinable to pardon Sinners; and that his Mercy is infinitely above Mans Sin; and that it is no Prejudice to his Holiness or Justice; and to apprehend seriously a constant Reality and solid Truth in the Promises of Gospel; *and so to convince a Soul of Righteousness*, Joh. xviii. that there is a Way of justifying a Sinner and ungodly Person, without Wrong to God's Righteousness; and this being well pondered in the Heart, and received in Love, the great Business is done; after that, *particular Application* is more easy, of which I shall not speak now, because Occasion will be given in the next *Verse*, about *the Spirit's witnessing with our Spirits*, which is another of the Spirit's workings: Only I say this, that which makes this so difficult, is a Defect in the first: But the common Principles of the Gospel are not really, and so seriously apprehended, because many Souls do not put to their Seal to witness to the Promises and Truth of it; therefore the Lord often denies this Seal and Witness to our Comfort. It is certainly a preposterous Way Satan puts Souls upon, *first*, to get such a Testimony from the *Spirit before* they labour to get such a Testimony to *Christ*, and Eccho or Answer in their Hearts to his Word: this Way it seems *shortest*; for it would leap into the greater Liberty at the first Hand; but certainly 'tis *farthest* about, because 'tis impossible for Souls to leap immediately out of Bondage to Assurance, without some middle Step: They cannot pass thus from *Extremes* to *Extremes*, without going through the middle State of receiving Christ, and laying his Word up in the Heart; and therefore it proves the Way furthest about, because when Souls have long wearied themselves, they must at length turn in hither.

But there is *another working of the Spirit*, I wish you were acquainted with. As the first Work is to beget a suitable Apprehension of God's Mind and Heart towards Sinners; so the *next* is, to beget a suitable Disposition in our Hearts towards God as a *Father*: The *first* apprehends his

his Love, the *next* reflects it back again with the Heart of a Sinner to him: The Spirit *first* brings the Report of the Love and Grace of God to us, and *then* he carries the Love and Respect of the Heart up to God.

You know how God complains in *Malachi*, *If I be a Father, where is my Fear and Honour?* For these are the only fitting Qualifications of Children, such a reverent, respective Observance of our heavenly Father, such affectionate and humble Carriage towards him, as becometh both his Majesty and his Love: As these are tempered one with another in him, his Love not abasing his Majesty, and his Majesty not diminishing his Love; so we ought to carry, as Reverence and Confidence, Fear and Love, may be contempered one with another; so as we may neither forget his infinite Greatness, nor doubt of his unspeakable Love: And this inward Disposition ingraven on the Heart, will be the Principle of willing and ready Obedience, it will in some Measure *be our Meat and Drink to do our Father's Will*; for Christ gave us an Example how we should carry towards him: How humble and obedient was he, tho' his only begotten Son?

SERMON XXXIX.

Verse 15. —*Whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

AS there is a Light of Grace in bestowing such incomparably high Dignities and excellent Gifts on poor Sinners, such as to make them the *Sons of God*, who were the Children of the Devil, and Heirs of a Kingdom, who were Heirs of Wrath; so there is a Depth of Wisdom in the Lord's Allowance and Manner of dispensing his Love and Grace in this Life; for though the Love be wonderful, that we should be called the *Sons of God*; yet as that *Apostle* speaks, *It doth not yet so clearly appear what we shall be, by what we are*, 1 John iii. 1. Our present Condition is so unlike such a State and Dignity, and our Enjoyments so unsuitable to our Rights and Privileges, that it would not appear by the mean, low, and indigent State we are now into, that we have so great and glorious a Father. How many Infirmities are we compassed about with? How many Wants are we pressed withal? Our Necessities are infinite, and our Enjoyments no ways proportioned to our Necessities: Notwithstanding even in this, the *Love* and *Wisdom* of our heavenly Father shews it self, and oftentimes more gloriously in the Theatre of Mens Weakness, Infirmities and Wants, than they could appear in the absolute and total Exemption of his Children from Necessities: Strength perfected in Weakness, Grace sufficient in Infirmities, hath some greater Glory than Strength and Grace alone. Therefore he hath chosen this Way as most fit for the advancing his Glory, and most suitable for

for our Comfort and Edification, to give us but little in Hand, and environ us with a Crowd of continued Neceſſities and Wants *within* and *without*, that we may learn to cry to him as our Father, and ſeek our Supplies from him; and withal he hath not been ſparing, but liberal in Promiſes of hearing our Cries, and ſupplying our Wants; ſo that this Way of narrow and hard Diſpenſation, that at firſt ſeems contrary to the Love and Bounty and Riches of our Father, in the perfect View of it, appears to be the only Way to perpetuate our Communion with him, and often to renew the Senſe of his Love and Grace, that would grow ſlack in our Hearts, if our Needs did not every Day ſtir up freſh Longings, and his Returns by this Means are ſo much the more refreſhing. There is a Time of Childrens *Minority*, when they ſtand in need of continual Supplies from their Parents, or Tutors, becauſe they are not entered in Poſſeſſion of their Inheritance; and while they are in this State, there is nothing more beſeeming them, than in all their Wants to addreſs to their Father, and repreſent them to him; and it is fit they ſhould be from Hand to Mouth, *as you ſay*, that they may know and acknowledge their Dependence on their Father. Truly this is our *Minority*, *our Preſence in the Body*, which becauſe of Sin that dwells in it, and its own natural Weakneſs and Incapacity, keeps us at much Diſtance with the Lord, that we cannot be intimately preſent with him. Now, in this Condition, the moſt comely and becoming Exerciſe of Children, is, to cry to our Father, to preſent all our Grievances; and thus to intertain ſome holy Correſpondence with our abſent Father; by the Meſſenger of Prayer and Supplication, which cannot return empty, if it be not ſent away too full of *Self-conceit*. This is the moſt natural Breathing of a Child of God in this World, it is the moſt proper acting of his new Life, and the moſt ſuitable *Exſpiration* of that Spirit of Adoption that is inſpired into him, Since there is ſo much Life as to know what we want, and our Wants are infinite; therefore that Life cannot but beat this Way, in holy Deſires after God, whoſe Fullneſs can ſupply all Wants: This is the Pulſe of a Chriſtian, that goeth continually, and there is much Advantage to the Continuity and Interruptedneſs of the Motion, from the *Infiniteneſs* and *Inexhauſtedneſs* of our Needs in this Life, and the continual Aſſaults that are made by *Neceſſity* and *Temptation* on the Heart. *But ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry*, &c. He puts in his own Name in the latter Part, though theirs was in the former Part: When he ſpeaks of a Donation or Privilege, he applies to the *meaneſt*, to ſhew that the *loweſt* and moſt deſpiſed Creature is not in any Incapacity to receive the greateſt Gifts of God; and then, when he mentions *the working of that Spirit* in way of Interceſſion, becauſe it imports Neceſſity and Want, he cares not to commit ſome Incongruity in the Language, by changing the Perſon, that he may teach us, that Weakneſs, Infirmities, and Wants, are common to the beſt and chiefeſt among Chriſtians; That the moſt eminent have continual Need to cry, and the loweſt and obſcureſt Believers have as good Ground to believe the Hearing and Acceptance of their Cries; that the higheſt are not above the weakeſt and loweſt Ordinance; and that the loweſt are not below the Comfort of Help and Acceptation in him. Nay, the Growth and Increaſe of Grace, is ſo far from exempting Men from, or ſetting them above

this

this Duty of conſtant Supplication, that by the contrary, this is the juſt Meaſure of their Growth and Altitude in Grace: As the Degrees of the Height of the Water *Nilus* in its overflowing, are a ſure Sign of the Fertility or Barrenneſs of that Year; ſo the Overflowings of the Spirit of Prayer in one gives a preſent Account how the Heart is, whether barren and unfruitful in the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, or fruitful and lively and vigorous in it. It is certain that Contraries do diſcover one another, and the more the one be increaſed, that is, not only the more incompatible and inconſiſtent with the other, but gives the moſt perfect diſcerning of it. When Grace is but as Twlight in the Soul, and as the Dawning of the Day only, groſs Darkneſs and Uncleanneſs is ſeen; but the more it grow to the perfect Day, the more Sin is Sin, and the more its hated Wants are diſcovered that did not appear; and therefore it exerciſeth its ſelf the more in Oppoſition to Sin, and Supplication to God. To ſpeak the Truth, our Growth here is but an Advancement in the Knowledge and Senſe of our Indigency: 'Tis but a further Entry into the idolatrous Temple of the Heart, which makes a Man ſee daily new Abominations worſe than the former; and therefore you may eaſily know that ſuch repeated Sights and Diſcoveries, will but preſs out more earneſt and frequent Cries from the Heart, and ſuch a Growth in Humility, and Faith in God's Fulneſs, will be but as Oil to feed the Flame of Supplication. For what is Prayer indeed, but the Ardency of the Affection after God, flaming up to him in Cries and Requeſts?

To ſpeak of this Exerciſe of an holy Heart, it would require more of the Spirit of it than we have: But truly this is to be lamented, that though there be nothing more common among Chriſtians in the outward Practice of it; yet that there is nothing more extraordinary and rare, even among many that uſe it, than to be acquainted with the inward Nature of it. Truly, the moſt ordinary Things in Religion, are the greateſt Myſteries, as to the true Life of them: We are Strangers to the Soul and Life of theſe Things, which conſiſts in the holy Behaviour and Deportment of our Spirits, before the Father of Spirits.

Theſe Words give ſome Ground to ſpeak of *ſome ſpecial Qualifications of Prayer*, and the *chief Principle of it*. The *chief Principle* and Original of Prayer, is, *the Spirit of Adoption* received into the Heart: It is a Buſineſs of a higher Nature, than can be taught by Precepts, or learned by Cuſtom and Education. There is a general Miſtake among Men, that the Gift of Prayer is attained by Learning, and that it conſiſts in the Freedom and Plenty of Expreſſion. But O! how many Doctors and Diſputers of the World, that can defend all the Articles of Faith againſt the Oppoſers of them; yet how unacquainted are they with this Exerciſe, that the poor and unlearned, and Nothings in the World, who cannot diſpute for Religion, yet they ſend up a more ſavory and acceptable Sacrifice, and ſweet Incenſe to God daily, when they offer up their Souls Deſires in Simplicity and Sincerity. Certainly this is a ſpiritual Thing, derived only from the Fountain of Spirits. This Grace of pouring out our Souls into him, and keeping Communication with him, the Variety of Words, and Riches of Expreſſions, it is but the Shell of it, the external Shadow; and all the Life conſiſts in the Frame of the Heart before God: And this none can put in Frame, but he that formed the Spirit of Man within him: Some through Cuſtom of Hearing

ing and using it, attain to a Habit of expressing themselves readily in it, it may be to the Satisfaction of others, but alas! they may be Strangers to the first Letters and Elements of the Life and Spirit of Prayer. I would have you who want both, look up to Heaven for it: Many of you cannot be induced to pray in your Family, (and I fear little or none in Secret, which is indeed a more serious Work) because you have not been used, or not learned, or such like. Alas! Beloved, this cometh not through Education or Learning, it cometh from the Spirit of Adoption: And if ye cannot pray, ye say *ye have not the Spirit, and if ye have not the Spirit, ye are not the Sons of God.* Know what is in the inevitable Sequel of your own Confessions.

But I haste to the *Qualifications* of this divine Work, *Fervency, Reverence, and Confidence*; Fervency *in crying, Reverence and Confidence* in crying, *Abba, Father*; for these two suit well towards our *Father*: The *first* I fear, we must seek it elsewhere than in Prayer, I find it spent on other Things of less Moment. Truly all the Spirit and Affection of Men runs in another Channel, in the way of Contention and Strife, in the Way of Passion and miscalled Zeal, and because these Things whereabout we do thus earnestly contend, have some Interest or Coherence with Religion, we not only excuse but approve our Vehemency. But O! much better where that imployed in Supplications to God, that were a divine Channel. Again, the Marrow of other Mens Spirits is exhausted in the Pursuit of Things in the World, the Edge of their Desires is turned that Way, and it must needs be blunted and dulled in spiritual Things, that it cannot pierce into Heaven, and prevail effectually. I am sure, many of us useth this Excuse, who are so cold in it, that we do not warm our selves; and how shall we think to prevail with God? Our Spirits make little Noise when we cry all the loudest; we can scarce hear any Whisper in our Hearts, and how shall he hear us? Certainly, it is not the Extension of the Voice pleaseth him, it is the Cry of the Heart that is sweet Harmony in his Ears: And you may easily perceive that, if you but consider that he is an infinite Spirit, that pierceth into all the Corners of our Hearts, and hath all the Darkness of it as Light before him, how can you think that such a Spirit can be pleased with Lip-cries? How can he endure such Deceit and Falshood, (who hath so perfect a Contrariety with all false Appearances) that your Heart should lye so dead and flat before him, and the Affection of it turned quite another Way? There were no Sacrifices without Fire in the Old Testament, and that Fire was kept in perpetually; and so no Prayer now without some inward Fire, conceived in the Desires, and blazing up and growing into a Flame in the presenting of them to God.

The Incense that was to be offered on the Altar of Perfume, *Exod.* xxx. it behoved to be beaten and prepared; and truly, Prayer would do well to be made out of a beaten and bruised Heart and contrite Spirit, a Spirit truly sensible of its own Unworthiness and Wants; and that beating and pounding of the Heart will yield a good fragrant Smell, as some Spices do not till beaten: The Incense was made of divers Spices, intimating to us, that true Prayer it not one Grace alone, but a Compound of Graces. It is the joint Exercise of all a Christian's Graces; seasoned with all; every one of them give some particular Fragrancy to it, as *Humi-*

lity, Faith, Repentance, Love, &c. The acting of the Heart in Supplication, is a Kind of Compend and Reſult of all theſe, as one Perfume made up of many Simples. But above all, as the Incenſe, our Prayers muſt be kindled by Fire on the Altar, there muſt be ſome Heat and Fervour, ſome Warmneſs conceived by the Holy Spirit in our Hearts, which may make our Spices ſend forth a pleaſant Smell, as many Spices do not till they get Heat. Let us lay this Engagement on our Hearts, to be more ſerious in our Addreſſes to God the Father of Spirits, above all, to preſent our inward Soul before him, before whom it is naked and open, though we do not bring it. And certainly Frequency in Prayer will much help us to Fervency, and to keep it when we have it.

SERMON XL.

Verſe. 15. — *Whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

ALL that know any Thing of Religion, muſt needs know and confeſs that there is no Exerciſe either more ſuitable to him that profeſſeth it, or more needful for him, than to give himſelf to the Exerciſe of Prayer: But that which is confeſſed by all, and as to the outward Performance gone about by many, I fear it is yet a Myſtery ſealed up from us, as to the true and living Nature of it. There is much of it expreſſed here in few Words, *Whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* The divine Conſtitution and *Qualifications* of this divine Work, is here made up of a Temper of *Fervency, Reverence,* and *Confidence.* The *firſt* I ſpoke of before; but I fear our Hearts were not well heated then, or may be cooled ſince. It is not the loud Noiſe of Words that is beſt heard in Heaven, or that is conſtructed to be crying to God: No, this is tranſacted in the Heart more ſilently to Men, but it ſtriketh up into the Ears of God: His Ear is ſharp, and the Voice of the Soul's Deſires is ſhrill, and though it were out of the Depths, they will meet together. It is true, the Vehemency of Affection will ſometimes cauſe the Extenſion of the Voice; but yet it may cry as loud to Heaven when it is kept within. I do not preſs ſuch extraordinary Degrees of Fervour as may affect the Body, but I would rather wiſh we accuſtomed our ſelves to a ſolid calm Seriouſneſs and Earneſtneſs of Spirit, which might be more conſtant than ſuch Raptures can be, that we might always gather our Spirits to what we are about, and avocate them from impertinent Wanderings, and fix them upon the preſent Object of our Worſhip: This is to worſhip him in Spirit, who is a Spirit.

The *other Thing* that compoſes the ſweet Temper of Prayer, is *Reverence*: And what more ſuitable? whether you con-

conſider him or your ſelves? *If I be your Father where is my Honour, and if I be your Maſter where is my Fear?* Mal. i. 6. While we call him *Father*, or *Lord*, we proclaim this much, that we ought to know our Diſtance from him, and his Superiority to us: And if Worſhip in Prayer carry not this Character, and expreſs not this honourable and glorious Lord, whom we ſerve, it wants that Congruity and Suitableneſs to him that is the Beauty of it. Is there any Thing more uncomely, than for Children to behave themſelves irreverently and irreſpectively towards their Fathers, to whom they owe themſelves? It is a monſtrous Thing even in Nature, and to Nature's Light: O how much more abominable muſt it be, to draw near to *the Father of Spirits, who made us, and not we our ſelves, in whoſe Hand our Breath is, and whoſe are all our Ways*; in a Word, to whom we owe not only this Duſt, but the living Spirit that animates it, that was breathed from Heaven, and *finally, in whom we live, and move, and have our Being*, and well-being, to worſhip ſuch an one, and yet to behave our ſelves ſo unſeemly and irreverently in his Preſence, our Hearts not ſtricken with the Apprehenſion of his Glory, but lying flat and dead before him, having ſcarcely him in our Thoughts whom we ſpeak to; and *finally*, our Deportments in his Sight, are ſuch, as could not be admitted in the Preſence of any Perſon a little above our ſelves, to be about to ſpeak to them, and yet to turn aſide continually to every one that cometh by, and entertain Communication with every baſe Creature; this, I ſay, in the Preſence of a King, or Nobleman, would be accounted ſuch an abſurd Incivility, as could be committed; and yet we behave our ſelves juſt ſo with the *Father of Spirits*.

O the Wandrings of the Hearts of Men in divine Worſhip! while we are in Communication with our Father and Lord in Prayer, whoſe Heart is fixed to a conſtant Attendance and Preſence, by the Impreſſion of his glorious Holineſs? whoſe Spirit doth not continually gadd abroad, and take a Word of every Thing that occurs, and ſo marrs that Soul correſpondence? O that this Word, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 7. were written with great Letters on our Hearts, *God is greatly to be feared in the Aſſembly of the Saints, and to be had in Reverence of all them that are about him:* That one Word, *God*, ſpeaketh all. Either we muſt convert him into an Idol, which is nothing; or if we apprehend him to be *God*, we muſt apprehend our infinite Diſtance from him, and his unſpeakable, inacceſſible Glory above us. He is greatly feared and reverenced in the Aſſemblies that are above, in the upper Courts of Angels; thoſe glorious Spirits who muſt cover their Feet from *us*, becauſe we cannot ſee their Glory; they muſt cover their Faces from *him*, becauſe they cannot behold his Glory, *Iſa.* vi. What a glorious Train hath he, and yet how reverend are they? They wait round about the Throne, above and about it, as Courtiers upon their King, for they are all miniſtring Spirits, and they reſt not Day and Night to adore and admire that holy One, crying, *Holy, Holy, Holy, the whole Earth is full of his Glory*. Now, how much more then ſhould he be greatly feared and had in Reverence in the Aſſembly of his Saints, of poor mortal Men, whoſe Foundation is in the Duſt, and in Clay; and beſides drink in Iniquity like Water? There is two Points of Difference and

Distance from us; he is nearer Angels, for Angels are *pure Spirits*, but we have Flesh, which is furthest removed from his Nature: And then Angels are *holy* and *clean*; yet that is but spotted to his unspotted Holiness; but *we* are defiled with Sin, which putteth us fartheſt off from him, and which his Holiness hath greatest Antipathy at. Let us consider this, my Beloved, that we may carry the Impression of the glorious Holiness and Majesty of God on our Hearts, when ever we appear before him, that so we may *serve and rejoice with Trembling, and pray with Reverence and godly Fear:* If we apprehend indeed our own Quality and Condition, how low, how base it is, how we cannot endure the very clear Aspect of our own Consciences, we cannot look on our selves stedfastly without Shame and Confusion of Face, at the deformed Spectacle we behold, much less would we endure to have our Souls opened and presented to the View of other Men, even the basest of Men, we would be overwhelmed with Shame as if they could see into our Hearts? Now then, apprehend seriously what he is, how glorious in Holiness? How infinite in Wisdom, how the Secrets of your Souls are plain and open in his Sight? And I am perswaded, you will be composed to a reverend, humble and trembling Behaviour in his Sight.

But withal, I must add this, That because he is *your Father*, you may intermingle *Confidence*; nay, you are commanded so to do, and this honours him as much as *Reverence*; for Confidence in God, as our Father, is the best Acknowledgment of the Greatness and Goodness of God; it declareth how able he is to save us, and how willing, and so ratifieth all the Promises of God made to us, and setteth to a Seal to his Faithfulness: There is nothing he accounts himself more honoured by, than a Soul's full resigning it self to him, and relying upon his Power and Good-will in all Necessities, casting its Care upon him, as a loving Father, who careth for us. And truly, there is much Beauty and Harmony in the Juncture of these two, *Rejoicing with Trembling, Confidence with Reverence, to ask, nothing doubting*, and yet sensible of our infinite Distance from him, and the Disproportion of our Requests to his Highness. A child-like Disposition is composed thus, as also the Temper and Carriage of a Courtier hath these Ingredients in it. The Love of his Father, and the Favour of his Prince, maketh him take Liberty, and assume Boldness; and withal he is not unmindful of his own Distance from his Father, or Master, *Let us draw near with full Assurance of Faith*, Heb. x. 22. There is much in the Scripture, both exhorted, commanded, and commended, of that παρρησια, that Liberty and Boldness of pouring out our Requests to God, as one that certainly will hear us, and grant that which is good. *Unbelief* spoileth all, it is a wretched and base-spirited Thing, that can conceive no honourable Thoughts of God, but only like it self; but *Faith*, which is the well-pleasing Ingredient of Prayer: The lower Thoughts a Man have of himself, it maketh him conceive the higher and more honourable of God, *My Ways are not as your Ways, nor my Thoughts as your Thoughts, but as far above, as the Heaven above the Earth*, Isa. lv. 8. This is the Rule of a believing Soul's conceiving of God, and expecting from him: And when a Soul is thus placed on God, by trusting and

and believing in him, it is fixed, *My Heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord*, Pſal. cxxvii. 7. O how wavering and inconſtant is a Soul, till it fix at this Anchor, upon the Ground of his immutable Promiſes? 'Tis toſſed up and down with every Wind, 'tis double-minded: Now one Way, then another; now in one Mind, and ſhortly changed: And indeed the Soul is like the Sea, capable of the leaſt or greateſt Commotion, *James* i. 6, 7, 8. I know not any Thing that will either fix your Hearts from wandering in Prayer, or eſtabliſh your Hearts from Trouble and Diſquiet after it, nothing that will ſo exoner and eaſe your Spirits of Care as this, to lay hold on God as All-ſufficient, and lay that Conſtraint on your Hearts, to wait on him and his Pleaſure, to caſt your Souls on his Promiſes, that are ſo full and ſo free, and abide there, as at your Anchor-hold, in all the Viciſſitudes and Changes of outward or inward Things. In *ſpiritual Things* that concern your Salvation, that which is abſolutely neceſſary, you may take the Boldneſs to be abſolute in it, and as *Job*, *Though he ſhould ſlay me, yet will I truſt in thee*; and as *Jacob*, *I will not let thee go till thou bleſs me*: But either in *outward* Things, that have ſome Uſefulneſs in them, but are not always fitteſt for our chiefeſt Good; or in the *Degrees of ſpiritual Gifts*, and Meaſures of Graces, the Lord calls us without Anxiety to pour out our Hearts in them unto him; but withal we would do it with Submiſſion to his Pleaſure, becauſe he knows beſt what is beſt for us. In theſe, we are not bound to be confident to receive the Particular we ask, but rather our Confidence ſhould pitch upon his *Good-will and Favour*, that he will certainly deny nothing that himſelf knows is good for us: And ſo in theſe we ſhould *abſolutely* caſt our ſelves with Carefulneſs upon his loving and fatherly Providence, and reſign our ſelves to him to be diſpoſed of in them as he ſees convenient. There is ſometimes too much Limitation of God, and Peremptorineſs uſed with him in ſuch Things, in which his Wiſdom craves a Latitude both in publick and private Matters, even as Mens Affections and Intereſts are ingaged; but ordinarily 'tis attended and followed with Shame and Diſappointment in the End: And there is on the other Hand intolerable Remiſſneſs and Slackneſs in many, in preſſing even the weightieſt Petitions of *Salvation*, *Mortification*, &c. which certainly ariſeth from the Diffidence and Unbelief of the Heart, and the Want of that rooted Perſwaſion, both of the incomparable *Neceſſity* and *Worth* of the Things themſelves, and of his Willingneſs and Engagement to beſtow them.

The Word is doubled here, *Abba, Father*, the *Syriack* and *Greek* Word ſignifying one Thing, expreſſing the tender Affection and Love of God towards them that come to him. *He that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that ſeek him diligently*; ſo he that cometh to God muſt believe that he hath the Bowels and Compaſſion of a Father, and will be more eaſily inclined with our importunate Cries, than the Fathers of our Fleſh: He may ſuffer his Children to cry long, but it is not becauſe he will not hear, but becauſe he would hear them longer, and delights to hear their Cry oftener. If he delay, 'tis his Wiſdom to appretiate and endear his Mercies to us, and to teach us to preſs our Petitions, and ſue for an Anſwer.

Be-

Beſides, this is much for our Comfort, that from whomſoever, and whatſoever Corner in the World Prayers come up to him, they cannot want Acceptance: All Languages, all Countries, all Places are ſanctified by Jeſus Chriſt, that *whoſoever calls upon the Name of the Lord, from the Ends of the Earth, ſhall be ſaved*: And truly it is a ſweet Meditation to think, that from the Ends of the Earth, the Cries of Souls are heard; and that the End is as near Heaven as the Middle; and a Wilderneſs as near as a Paradiſe; that though we underſtand not one another, yet we have one loving and living Father that underſtands all our Meanings; and ſo the different Languages and Dialects of the Members of this Body make no Confuſion in Heaven, but meet together in his Heart and Affection, and are one Perfume, one Incenſe, ſent up from the whole Catholick Church, which here is ſcattered on the Earth, O that the Lord would perſwade us to cry this Way to our Father in all our Neceſſities!

Fel-

Fellowſhip with GOD:

OR,

XXVIII. SERMONS on the 1. Epiſtle of *John*, *Chap.* i. and ii.

Wherein the true Ground and Foundation of attaining the ſpritual Way of intertaining Fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, and the bleſſed Condition of ſuch as attain to it, are moſt ſuccinctly and dilucidly explained.

To the ſincere Seeker after Fellowſhip with GOD, and ſeriouſly Heaven-ward-tending Chriſtian.

Dear and well-beloved Friend,

AS *thou art in thy ſelf a rare Jewel, a moſt precious Stone, one of a thouſand, yea, of ten thouſand, being compared with the many thouſands of common Stones, I mean, external Profeſſors in the viſible Church, who reſt on a bare Name, and of whom that is verified in every Nation, which our Saviour ſaith,* Mat. xx. 16. Many are called but few choſen; *and of many of which that is alſo too true in every Generation (and oh! that it were not too manifeſt in this alſo) which* Paul *obſerved in his Time,* Phil. iii. 18, 19. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you; even weeping, that they are the Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt. Whoſe End is Deſtruction, whoſe god is their Belly, and whoſe Glory is in their Shame, who mind earthly Things. *And as to* Chriſt thy Lord, *moſt comely* as a Lilie among Thorns, being his Love among the Daughters, *Cant.* ii. 2. *So alſo, thou in a ſpecial Way art* the dearly beloved and longed for, the Joy and Crown, *of every ſincere Servant of Chriſt in the Goſpel,* Phil. iv. 1. *Thou art, if not the only, yet the chief Object of their Labours, their Work being either to confirm and ſtrengthen thee in thy Way,* that thou may ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord, *or remove Impediments, make crooked Things ſtraight, and ſo* prepare the Way of the Lord before thee, *or to guide thee by the Light of God's Word in the dark Night of Temptations and Deſertion: Now, as we are confident theſe Sermons were preached at firſt by that bleſſed ſerious Labourer in the Work of the Miniſtry, Mr.* Hew Binning, *with a ſpecial Eye to the Advancement of ſincere Seekers after Fellowſhip with God, and ſeriouſly Heaven-ward-tending Chriſtians amongſt his Hearers: So to whom ſhall we direct this poſthumous, and alas, unperfected Work, but to thee (O ſerious Chriſtian) who makes it thy Work not only to ſeek after the Knowledge of God in Chriſt, in a meer ſpeculative Way, that thou may know, and therein reſt, as if thy Work were done, but alſo to follow after the Enjoyment of that known God, and believed on Saviour, and all the promiſed Privileges of Grace in this Life, and of eternal Glory in the Life to come.; To thee eſpecially belong theſe precious Soul-raviſhing Truths delivered in theſe Sermons. Two Things, we know, thou haſt determined thy Soul unto, and fixed thine Eye on, as thy Aim and Mark in thy Generation, viz. the Light of Knowledge, and the Life of Practice: As to Knowledge, we are confident that with the Apoſtle* Paul, 1 *Cor.* ii. 2. Thou haſt determined to know nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified; *and as to Practice, with the ſaid Apoſtle thou prays,* That thou may be ſincere and without Offence till the Day of Chriſt, being filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus

Christ unto the Glory of God, *Phil.* i. 10, 11. And that thou may be blameless and harmless, the Son of God without Rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation, shining as a Light in the World, *Phil.* ii. 15. *Now in reading these Sermons thou shall perceive, that to help thee in both these, hath been the very Scope and Design of this serious Preacher. Desirest thou to know* Jesus Christ the Lord of Life, *either according to his eternal Subsistence in the infinite Understanding of the* Father, as God, *or as to his Appearance in the Flesh,* as Man, *or Fitness as* Mediator, *to reconcile thee to God his Father, both in respect of Willingness and Ability to save? Then here thou shall behold him delineate to the Life. Would thou be clearly informed anent the only true and sure Foundation of Fellowship with God, the Way of entertaining it, the Honour or Happiness of it, and sweet Fruits of it, that Fulness of Joy that accompanies it? Here shall thou find so clear a Light as shall rejoyce thy Soul. Would thou be fortified against the Incursions and Recursions of Sin and Satan? Then come to this Magazine, and be furnished abundantly. Desirest thou to have thy Soul increased in the Love of God, and to see manifest Demonstrations of his Love in Christ to thee? Oh then turn in hither, and get Satisfaction to thy Soul's Desires. If thou desirest with* David, *to hate Sin with a perfect Hatred; here, if any where, thou shalt obtain thy Desire. Yet let none think that we limit the Benefit and Usefulness of these Sermons to serious Christians only, and so by Consequence exclude all others from any Hope of Soul-advantage in reading them. Nay, we declare that though it be undenyable that* John *did write this Epistle with a special Respect to the spiritual Advantage of serious Christians, and that this holy Preacher also, had this same Design, yet we dare be bold to invite all of what Degree soever, to the serious perusing of them, assuring them that in so doing,* they shall not find their Labour in vain in the Lord; *for here are such pregnant Demonstrations of a Deity, Infinite, Eternal, Omnipotent, Incomprehensible, Governing all Things by the Word of his Power, as may dash the Boldness of the most metaphysical notional, or prophanely practical Atheist, and with Conviction of Spirit make him cry out, as* Psal. lxxiii. 22. So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a Beast before thee! *Here are such clear Discoveries of the Vileness of Sin, of its direct Opposition to a holy God, and his most holy Will, of its woful Soul damning Effects, as may convince the most prophane and stout-hearted Carnalist, and awake him out of his Soul-destroying Sleep of Security and Presumption: Here are so glorious Evidences* of God's free and inconceivable Love to the World, in Christ Jesus the Son of his Love, *as are able to inlighten with the Light of Consolation the sadliest dejected and cast down Soul, under the Apprehension of the Curse and Wrath of God due to it for Sin, and raise it up to the Hope of Mercy in and through so clearly a revealed Saviour: In a Word, here are to be found Convictions for Atheists, piercing Rebukes to the prophane, clear Instructions to the Ignorant, Milk to Babes in Christ, strong Meat for the strong, Strength to the Weak, Quickning and Reviving for such as faint in the Way, Restoratives for such as are in a Decay, Reclamations and loud Oyesses after Backsliders to recal them*

them, Breasts of Consolations for Zion's *Mourners, whether under the first Convictions of the Law, and Pangs of the new Birth, or under the Challenges and Compunctions of Heart for Recidivations and Relapses after Conversion, even while they are groaning under the Power and* Burden of the Body of Death, *Rom.* vii. *And to add no more, here are most excellent Counsels and Directions to serious Seekers of Fellowship with God, to guide them in their Way, and help them forward to the Attainment of that Fulness of Joy which is to be had in Fellowship with* the Father and the Son. *That the Lord may bless all such to whose Hands these Sermons shall come, with Blessings suitable to their Souls Condition, especially (the serious Christian,) for whose Souls-furtherance and Advancement these Sermons were first penn'd, and now printed, is the most affectionate Desire of*

Thy Servant in the Gospel of
our dearest Lord and Saviour,

A. S.

FELLOWSHIP with GOD.

SERMON I.

1 John i. 1. *That which was from the Beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our Eyes, which we have looked upon, and our Hands have handled of the Word of Life.*

IT is the great Qualification of a Diſciple, or Hearer, to be attentive, and docile, to be capable of Teaching, and to apply the Mind ſeriouſly to it: It is much to get the Ear of a Man; if his Ear be gotten, his Mind is the more eaſily gained: Therefore thoſe who profeſſed Eloquence, and ſtudied to perſwade Men to any Thing, uſed in the Entry, to fall upon ſome Thing that might ſtir up the Attention of their Hearers, or make them the more inclinable to receive Inſtruction, or catch their Favour or good Will, which is of great Moment to Perſwaſion: For it is ſometimes fit to open the Paſſages of the Heart by ſuch Means, that there may be the more eaſy Entry for Inſtruction and Perſwaſion. Truly there is ſomething of this Art runs here in a divine Channel; as indeed all theſe Rules of humane Wiſdom attain their Perfection, when they meet with a divine Spirit, that elevates them to a more tranſcendant Uſe. Happy was that Eloquence of *Paul*'s, and ſomething like the ſweet Inſpiration of Angels, by which they prevail with the Spirits of Men: *Nevertheleſs being crafty* (ſaith he) *I caught you with Guile*, 2 Cor. xii. 16. Theſe were *piæ fraudes*, whereby he uſed to catch poor Souls out of the Pit, and pluck them out of the Fire; and he that ſaid, *I will make you Fiſhers of Men*, taught them to uſe ſome holy Deceit, to preſent ſome Things for the Allurement of Souls, and ſo to ſurround and incloſe them with moſt weighty and convincing Reaſons. This beloved Apoſtle, who leaned upon Chriſt's Boſom, and was likely to learn the

the very Secrets of the Art of fishing Souls, you see how he goeth about the Business; he useth an holy Art in this Preface; being about to give a Re-capitulation of the whole Gospel, and to make a short Summary of the Doctrine of it, for the more effectual Establishment and Confirmation of Souls already converted, and for the powerful Perswasion of others to imbrace it; he useth all the Skill that can be in the Entry, to dispose Mens Hearts to receive it; like a wise Orator, he labours to make them *attentos, dociles, & benevolos*; to stir up their Attention, to conciliate their Affection, and so to make them docile, and easily teachable: He stirs up Attention, when he shews that he is not to speak about trifling light Matters, or low Things, or Things that do not concern them; but concerning the greatest, most concerning, and important Things to them, even *the Word of Life*, in which, all their Life was wrapt up: Which, though it was ancient in it self, yet withall it was a new Thing to the World, and so for all respects deserved to be taken serious Notice of. Then he conciliates their Benevolence and Good-will, by shewing his own good Affection towards them, and his great Design in it, that it was only for their Good and Salvation, that he had nothing else before him, but to have them Partakers with himself, in that same Happiness: He had found a Jewel, and he hides it not, but proclaims it, that all Men may have Fellowship with him, and that is, with *God*, and that cannot but bring in full Joy to the Heart. Now a Soul being made thus attentive, and willing to hear, it is the best Disposition, that makes them most capable of being taught. If those two Stayes were come over; the careless Regard that is in Mens Hearts towards the Gospel, and the suspicious Thoughts and Prejudices against the Ambassadors of it, then what would hinder to believe it? The great Miseries of Men are, *Inconsideration* and *Misapprehension*: Either Men are so noised with other Things, continually buzzing in their Ears, and their Hearts so possest with the Clamours of their Lusts, and the Cries of the Things of this World, that they have no Leisure so much as to hearken patiently to this blessed Sound, or to apprehend seriously what Weight and Moment lyes in it; and so the most Part of Men cannot give that earnest and deep Attention that is necessarily required for this divine Teaching; or else there are many Mistakes and Misconceptions of the Gospel, which sometimes arise to that Height of reasoning against God, and Prejudices against them that carry this Message, which usually are joined together, and these stop the Ears of Men against the wisest and most powerful Inchantment of Preaching, that it gains not much Ground on them. O that ye would once listen to the Gospel. *Hearken and incline your Ears unto me*, is the Lord's first great Request: And if once you do but seriously apply your Minds and Hearts, to see what is held out unto you, and to prove what Good is in it, certainly these sure and everlasting Mercies will mercifully and sweetly catch you with Guile, and deceive you, (if I may say so) to your eternal Advantage. *Wisdom, the Father's Wisdom*, begs but an equal hearing of you; let her have but a patient Hearing, and a silent impartial Judgment of the Heart, and she will carry it off all that suit you: It is lamentable that the Voice of God should be out-cried by Mens continual uninterrupted Flood of Business, that fills the Heart with a continual Noise, and keeps

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Men in such a constant Hurry and Distemper, that they can give Time and Patience to nothing else; and this is only the Advantage the World and the Lusts of it have; for if they come once under a sober and serious Examination, and the other Party, that is *Jesus Christ*, and *the Word of Life*, might have the Liberty to be heard in the inward retired Thoughts of the Heart, it would soon be found how unequal they are, and that all their Efficacy consists in our Ignorance, and their Strength in our Weakness; certainly Christ would carry it, to the Conviction of all that is in the Soul. I beseech you let us give him this Attention.

He that *answers a Tale before he hear it*, 'tis a Folly and Weakness to him: A Folly certainly it is to give this Gospel a Repulse before ye hear it: It promiseth Life and Immortality, which nothing else doth; and you entertain other Things upon lower Promises and Expectations, even after frequent Experiences of their Deceitfulness: What a Madness then is it to hear this Promise of Life in Christ, so often beaten upon you, and yet never omuch as to put him to the Proof of it? And to put him off continually who knocks at your Hearts, before you will consider attentively who it is that thus importunes you. O, my Beloved, that you would hear him to *Amen*; let him speak freely to your Hearts, and commune with them in the Night on your Beds, in your greatest Retirement from other Things, that you may not be disturbed by the Noise of your Lusts and Business; and I perswade my self, you who have now least mind of this Life, and Joy in God, should find it, and find it in him: But to cut off all Convictions, and Perswasions at first, and to set such a Guard at your Minds, to provide that nothing of that kind come in, or else that it be cast out as an Enemy, this is unequal, ignorant, and unreasonable Dealing, which you alone will repent of, it may be too late, when past Remedy.

He propounds that which he is to speak in the fittest Way, for the Commendation of it to their Hearts; And Oh! How vast a Difference betwixt this, and the ordinary Subject of Mens Discourses? Our Ears are filled continually with Reports: And it is the usual Way of Men to delight to hear, and to report even those Things that are not so delightful in themselves; and truly there are not many Occurences in the World (suppose you had a Diurnal of Affairs of all Men every Week) that can give any solid Refreshment to the Heart, except in the holy Meditation of the Vanity, Vexation, and Inconstancy that God hath subjected all those Things unto. But 'tis sad, that Christians, who have so noble and divine, so pleasant and profitable Things to speak upon one to another, are notwithstanding as much subject to that *Athenian* Disease, to be itching after new Things continually, and to spend our Time this Way, to report, and to hear News; and alas, what are those Things that are tossed up and down continually, but the Follies, Weaknesses, Impotencies and Wickedness, Ambition and Avarice of Men, the Iniquity and Impiety of the World that lies in Wickedness? And is there any Thing in this, either pleasant or profitable, that we should delight to intertain our own Thoughts, and others Ears with them? But the Subject that is here intreated of, is of another Nature; nothing in it self so excellent, nothing to us so convenient. *That which was from the Beginning, of the Word of Life, we declare unto you.* O how pleasant and sweet a Voice is that which

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ſounds from Heaven, be thoſe confuſed Noiſes are that ariſe from the Earth? This is a Meſſage that is come from Heaven, with him that came down from it: And indeed that is the Airth, from whence good News hath come; ſince the firſt Curſe was pronounced upon the Earth, the Earth hath brought forth nothing but Thorns and Briars of Contention, Strife, Sorrow, and Vexation: Only from above hath this Meſſage been ſent to renew the World again, and recreate it, as it were: There are four Properties, by which this infinitely ſurpaſſes all other Things can be told you. For it ſelf it is moſt excellent; for its Endurance it is moſt ancient; and to us it is moſt profitable; and both in its ſelf, and to us, it is moſt certain; and by theſe the Apoſtle labours to prepare their Hearts to ſerious Attention.

For the Excellency of the Subject that he is to declare, 'tis incomparable, for it is no leſs than that Jewel that is hid in the Mine of the Scriptures, which he, as it were, digs up, and ſhews and offers it unto them; that Jewel (I ſay) which, when a Man hath found, he may ſell all to buy it; that Jewel, more precious than the moſt precious Deſires and Delights of Men, even *Jeſus Chriſt, the ſubſtantial Word of Life*, who is the Subſtance of all the Shadows of the Old Teſtament, the End of that Miniſtry, the Accompliſhment of the Promiſes, and that very Life of all Religion, without which there is nothing more vain and empty. It is true, the Goſpel is the *Word of Life*, and holds out Salvation to poor Sinners; but yet it is Chriſt that is the Life of that Word, not only as touching the Efficacy and Power of it, but as touching the Subject of it; for the Goſpel is a Word of Life only, becauſe it ſpeaks of him, who is *the Life and the Light of Men*; it is but a Report of the true Life, as *John* ſaid, *I am not that Light, but am ſent to bear Witneſs of that Light*, John i, 8. So the Goſpel, tho' it be called *the Power of God to Salvation*, Rom. i. 16. and *the Savour of Life*, and *the Goſpel of Salvation*, Eph. i. 13. yet it is not that *true Life*, but only a Teſtimony and Declaration of it; it hath not Life and Immortality in it ſelf, but only the *bringing of thoſe to Light*, and to the Knowledge of Men, 2 *Tim.* i. 10. It is a Diſcovery where theſe Treaſures are lying, for the ſearching and finding.

To ſpeak of this *Word of Life, Jeſus Chriſt*, according to his eternal Subſiſtence in the infinite Underſtanding of the *Father*, it would certainly require a divine Spirit, more elevated above the ordinary Sphere of Men, and ſeparate from that Earthlineſs, and Impurity, that makes us incapable of ſeeing that holy and pure Majeſty. Angels were but low Meſſengers for this; for how can they expreſs to us, what they cannot conceive themſelves, and therefore wonder at the Myſtery of it? I confeſs, the beſt Way of ſpeaking theſe Things, which ſo infinitely ſurpaſs created Capacities, were to ſit down in Silence, and wonder at them; and withall to taſte ſuch a Sweetneſs, in the immenſe Greatneſs and infinite Myſteriouſneſs of what we believe, as might raviſh the Soul more, after that which is unknown, than all the Perfections of the World known and ſeen to the Bottom can do. This Doctrine of the holy Trinity hath been propagated from the Beginning of the World, even among the Heathens, and derived by Tradition from the firſt Fathers, or the *Hebrews*, to neighbour Nations; and therefore they ſpeak many divine Things of that *Infinite, Supreme Being*,

Being, who is the Fountain of the whole Creation, and that he created all Things by his most divine *Word*, and that his blessed *Spirit* is the Union and Bond of both, and of all Things besides. It is known what Mysteries the *Pythagoreans* apprehended in the Number of *Three*, what Perfection they imagined to be in it: So much was let out, as might either make them without Excuse, or prepare the World to receive readily the Light, when it should be clearly revealed: It is commonly held forth, that this *eternal Word*, is the Birth of the infinite Understanding of God, reflecting upon his own most absolute and perfect Being; which is illustrated by some poor Comparison to us Creatures, who form in our Minds, in the understanding of any Thing, an inward Word, or Image of the Object, some Representation and Similitude of that we understand; and this is more perfect, than an external vocal Expression can be; so we have a weak and finite Conception of the acting of that *infinite Wisdom of God*, by which he knows himself, that there results, as it were, upon it, the perfect *substantial Image, and the express Character of the Divine Essence*; and therefore is the Son of God called, *the Word which was with God*, and *the Wisdom of the Father*, because he is, as it were, the very Birth of his Understanding, and not only the Image of his own Essence, but the *Idea*, in which he conceived, and by which he created the visible World. Then we use to conceive the *Holy Ghost*, as the Production of his blessed Will, whereby he loves, delights, and hath Complacency in his own all-sufficient, all-blessed Being, which he himself alone perfectly comprehends, by his infinite Understanding; and therefore called, *the Spirit*, a Word borrowed from Resemblance to poor Creatures, who have many Impulses, and Inclinations to several Things, and are carried to Motion, and Action, rather from that Part which is invisible in them; the subtilest Parts therefore called *Spirits*: So the Lord applies his Almighty Power, and exerceth his infinite Wisdom, according to the Pleasure and Determination of his Will, for that seems to be the immediate Principle of working; therefore there is Mention made of the *Spirit*, in the Creation of the World, *He sent out his Spirit, and they were created*, Psal. civ. 30. These are the weak and low Attempts of Men to reach the Height of that unsearchable Mystery; such Conjectures we have of this *Word of God*, and his eternal Generation, as if Trees could take upon them to understand the Nature of Beasts, or as if Beasts would presume to give an Account of the Spirit that acts in Men; Certainly the Distance is infinitely greater between God and us; and he must needs behold greater Vanity, Folly and Darkness, in our clearest Apprehensions of his Majesty, than we could find in the Reasonings and Conceptions of Beasts about our Nature. When our own Conception in the Womb is such a Mystery, as made *David* to say, *O how wonderfully am I made, and fearfully?* He saw a curious Art and Wisdom in it, that he could not understand, and he believed an infinite Power, he could not conceive, which surprized his Soul with such unexpected Matter of Wonder, as made him fear and tremble at the Thought of it. I say, when the Generation of a poor Creature, hath so much Depth of Wisdom in it, how canst thou think to understand that everlasting Wonder of Angels, the Birth and Conception of *that eternal Wisdom of God?* And if thou

canſt not underſtand from whence thee Wind comes, and whither it goes, or how thine own Spirits beat in thy Veins, what is the Production of them, and what their Motions; how can we then conceive the Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, *which Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conſider it?*

SERMON II.

1 John i. 1. *That which was from the Beginning*, &c.

THINGS are commended ſometimes, becauſe they are ancient, eſpecially Doctrines in Religion, becauſe Truth is before Error, and Falſhood is but an Aberration from Truth; and therefore there is ſo much Plea and Contention among Men, about Antiquity, as if it were the ſufficient Rule of Verity; but the Abuſe is, that Men go not far enough backward in the Steps of Antiquity, that is, to the moſt ancient Rule, and Profeſſion, and Practice of Truth in Scripture, to Chriſt and his Apoſtles, but halt in their Grand-fathers Tombs. But ſometimes Things are commended, becauſe new; the Nature of Man being inclined to Change and Variety, and ready to ſurfeit and loath accuſtomed Things: Even as the Stomach finds Appetite for new and unuſual Diets, ſo the Mind of Man hath a ſecret Longing after new Doctrines, and Things. Now we have both theſe combined together in this Subject, which makes it the more excellent and wonderful; Antiquity, and Novelty: For Antiquity, it is that *which was from the Beginning*, and *which was with the Father*, and that is before all Antiquity, even from Eternity; not only from the Beginning of Time, but before all Time, before all imaginable Beginnings. He, of whom he ſpeaks, *Chriſt Jeſus, the Father's Word, was with the Father, from the Beginning, with the Ancient of Days*, who infinitely, and unmeaſurably, antidates all Antiquity, to whoſe Endurance, all Antiquity that is renowned among Men, is but Novelty; to whom the World is but as of ſix Days ſtanding, or but as of yeſterday, if we conſider that infinite, beginningleſs, immenſurable Endurance of God, before this World: What a Boddom or Clew is that, that can never be untwined by the Imaginations of Men and Angels; to all Eternity they ſhould never unwind it, and come to the End of that Threed of the Age of the Father, and the Son, who poſſeſſed one another before the Hills were, and before the Foundations of the Mountains: This is it that maketh Religion the richeſt and moſt tranſcendant Subject in the World, that it preſents us with a twofold Eternity, and invirons the Soul before and behind with an Eternity without Beginning, only proper to God, and an Eternity without End, communicated to Angels and Men, from God. That which was from the Beginning, and before all Beginning, either

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real, or imagined, how much Moment and Weight is in that, to perswade a Soul, and compose it, beyond all the specious and painted Appearances of the World? To consider that such a Saviour is holden out unto us, to come unto, and lean upon, that is *the Rock of Ages*, upon whose Word this huge Frame is bottomed, and stands firm; one who infinitely exceeds and prevents all Things visible or invisible, all their Mutations and Changes; one who was possessed of the Father, as his Delights, before the Foundation of the World, and so most likely to reconcile him to us, and prevail with him; yea, most certainly, they must have one Will, and one Delight, who were undivided from all Eternity; and they then *Rejoycing in the habitable Parts of the Earth*, taking Complacency in their own Thoughts of Peace and Good-will they had towards us, afterwards to break forth. And if both delighted in their very Projects and Plots upon the Business, what may we think the Accomplishment of the whole Design will add, if it were possible to superadd to their Delight? I would have you upon this, to gather two Considerations, for your Edification: One, to think what an incomparably excellent Saviour we have, one with God, equal to him, yea, one with him from all Eternity; and so how strong a Foundation there is for Faith and Confidence? What a Rock to establish a tossed Soul upon? Mans Misery and Curse being for all Eternity, there is one to deliver from that, who was from all Eternity. And who could purchase unto us such absolute Blessedness throughout all Eternity, who was not himself from all Eternity? What marvellous Congruity and Beauty is in the Ways of God? How is all fitted and framed by infinite Wisdom, to the End that we may have strong Consolation? Do you not see the infinite Evil and Hainousness of Sin, in the giving of such a precious Ransom for it? O how is the black Visage of Sin pourtrayed in the Beauty and Glory of the Mediator's Person? How is it painted, even to Horrour in his Death? Again, what Divinity and Worth is put upon the immortal Soul of Man, that is but of yesterday, since the Beginning; when he that was the Delight of God, before all Beginning, is weighed in the Ballance, as it were with it, and no other Thing found sufficient for Exchange and Compensation, that the Soul may be redeemed? And doth not this answer all the Jealousies and suspicious Thoughts, and fearful Apprehensions, arising from the Consideration of our own Weakness and Infirmity; when such an one is offered, as is able to save to the utmost? Then I would desire you may believe, that the Father is as well minded to the Salvation of Sinners, as the Son; for they were sweet Company together from all Eternity, and, as it were, contrived this Plot and Design between them, to save and redeem Mankind. Some entertain harsher Thoughts of the Father, as if Christ were more accessible, and exorable; but the Truth is, he hath given his Son this Command, and therefore he professed, that it was not so much his Will, as his Father's he was about: Therefore correct your Apprehensions, do not stand aback from the Father, as it were, till you have prevailed with Christ; no, that is not the Way; come in your first Address to the Father, in the Son, for so he wills you; not because he must be overcome by his Son's Perswasion, but because he would have his Love to run in that

Channel, through Christ to us: And indeed our Saviour was much in holding out the Love of the Father, and laboured to perswade the World of it. Withal, I wish you to consider whom ye neglect and despise, who hear this Gospel daily, and the Word of Life holden out unto you; and yet suffer not your Hearts to be moved, or stirred after him. Alas, my Beloved, to forsake so great a Mercy, as the *eternal Word of Life*, as the *infinite Wisdom of the Father*, and to let the Offer of this every Day run by us, and never to find Leisure and Vacancy from the Multitude of Businesses, and Throng of the Thoughts and Lusts of the World, never to start so far backward, as to look beyond this World, to *God*, and his *Son Jesus Christ*, never to mind seriously, either him that was before all Things visible, or our own Souls, that must survive and out-live all this visible Frame. This, I say, is the great Misery and Condemnation of the World, that this *eternal Light* hath shined, and you love your own Darkness better: But be perswaded, that one Day ye will think one Offer of this *Word of Life*, better than Life, better, infinitely better than the most absolute Life that the Attendance and Concurrence of all the Creatures could yield you. O then that ye would incline your Ears and Hearts to this that is declared unto you, to receive this *Word of Life, that was from the Beginning*, and ye may be perswaded, ye shall enjoy a Blessedness without End.

But there is withal a Newness in this Subject, which both increases Admiration, and may the more engage our Affection; for *the Life was manifested* (saith he) *Verse* 2. and he is such a *Word of Life*, as though he was invisible, and untouchable from the Beginning, yet he was lately cloathed with Flesh, that made him both visible, and capable of being handled. Now truly these are the two Poles, about which the Mystery, Glory, and Wonder of Christianity turns: The Antiquity of his real Existence, as God; and the Lateness or Novelty of his Appearance in the Flesh, as Man; nothing so old, for he hath the infinite Fore-start of the oldest and most ancient Creatures. Take those Angels, the Sons of God, who sung together in the first Morning of the Creation, yet their Generation can soon be told, and their Years numbered; it is easy to calculate all Antiquity, and we should not reach six thousand Years, when it is taken at the largest Measure; and what are six thousand Years in his Sight, but as six Days, when they are past? And if we would run backward, as far before that Point of Beginning, and calculate other six thousand, yet we are never a Jot nearer the Age of the *Son of God*. Suppose a Mountain of Sand, as big as the Earth, and an Angel to take from it one Grain every Year, your Imagination would weary it self, ere ye reckoned in what Space this Mountain should be diminished, or removed: It would certainly trouble the Arithmetick of the wisest Mathematician. Now imagine as many Years, or Ages of Years, to have run out before the World took its Beginning, as the Years in which the Angel would exhaust this Mountain; yet we have not come a whit nearer the Endurance of our Lord and Saviour, whose Being is like a Circle, without Beginning or End. *Behold he is great, and we know him not, and the Number of his Years cannot be searched out*, Job xxxvi. 26. *And who can tell his Generation?* The Age of *this Word* is such a Labyrinth, with innumerable Turnings and Wind-

Windings in it, which will always lead them round that enter in it; and so they are, after the longest Progress and Search, but just where they were, always Beginning, and never coming nearer the Beginning of his Duration, because it is the Beginning of all Things that have a Beginning, but hath none it self. Now he that was thus blessed from everlasting, *who dwelt in inaccessible Light and Glory, which no Man hath seen, nor can see*, infinitely removed from all humane Capacities and Senses; he, I say, begins to be manifested in the Fulness of Time; and to make himself visible, he takes on our Flesh; and all for this Purpose, that he who was the substantial Life in himself, and the eternal Life, in an essential and necessary Way, might become Life to poor dead Sinners, and communicate to them eternal Life: And truly it was no Wonder that all Ages were in Expectation of this, from the Beginning of the World, since it was first promised, that the Inhabitants of Heaven were in a longing Expectation to see, and look into this Mystery, for there is something in it more wonderful than the Creation of this huge Frame of Heaven and Earth: God made himself in a manner visible, by making the visible World: His Power, Goodness, and Wisdom, are every where imprinted in great Characters on the whole, and all the Parts of it: *The Light*, how glorious a Garment is it, with which he is, as it were, cloathed? The *Heavens*, how majestick a Throne? the *Earth*, how stately a Foot-stool? the *Thunder*, how glorious and terrible a Voice? In a Word, the Being, the Beauty, the Harmony, and Proportion of this huge Frame, is but a visible Appearance of the invisible God. But in taking on our Flesh, *the Word* is more wonderfully manifested, and made visible; for, in the first, the Creator made Creatures to start out of nothing, at his Command; but in this, the Creator is made a Creature: He once gave a Beginning of Being to Things that were not: Being before all Beginning himself, he now takes a Beginning, and becomes Flesh, that he was not. And what is it in which he was manifested? Is it the spiritual Nature of Angels? But though that far excel ours, yet it is no Manifestation of him to us; for he should still be as unknown as ever. Is it in the Glory, Perfection, and Flower of the visible World, as in the Sun, and Lights of Heaven? But though that have more Shew of Glory, than the Flesh of Man; yet it makes not much to our Comfort; there would not be so much Consolation in that Manifestation. Therefore, O how wisely and wonderfully is it contrived, for the Good of lost Man? *That the Son of God shall be made of a Woman*, that the *Father of Spirits* shall be manifested in the lowest Habit of our Flesh: And the lower and baser that be, in which he appears, the higher the Mystery is, and the richer the Comfort is; suppose the Manifestation of Glory should not be so great, yet the Manifestation of Love is so much the greater; and this is the great Design, *God so loved*, &c. *John* iii. Nay, I may say, even the Glory of *the only begotten Son of God*, was the more visibly manifested, that he appeared in so low and unequal a Shape; for Power to shew it self in Weakness, for Glory to appear in Baseness, for Divinity to kythe in Humanity, and such glorious Rays to break forth from under such a dark Cloud; this was greater Glory, and more Majesty, than if he had only shewed himself in the Perfection of the Creatures. Now

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it is easy to distinguish the Vail, from that it covers; to separate Infirmity from Divinity: But then it had been more difficult, if his outward Appearance had been so glorious, to give unto God what was God's, and to give the Creatures what was the Creatures: The more near his outward Shape had been to his divine Nature, the less able had we been to see the Glory of his Divinity through it.

Now, my Beloved, when both these are laid together, the Ancientness of our Saviour, and withal the Newness of his Appearnce in the Flesh, by which he hath come so near us, and, as it were, brought his own Majesty within our Sphere, to be apprehended by us; and for no other End, but to make Life and Immortality to shine forth, as Beams from him, to the quickning of dead Souls, O how should this Conjunction endear him to us: That the *everlasting Father* should become a Child for us; that is one Wonder. The next Wonder is, That *we who are Enemies, should be made the Children of God by him:* When the dark and obscure propheſying of this, when the Twilight of *Jewish* Types and Shadows did create so much Joy in the Hearts of Believers, in so much that they longed for, and rejoyced to see afar off that Day; when such a dark Representation of this *Word of Life*, was the very Life of the Godly in the World for four thousand Years; O how much is the Cause of Joy increased, by the rising of the *Sun of Righteousness* himself, and appearing in the very darkest Night of Superstition and Idolatry that was ever over the World? When the *true Life* hath arisen himself, and brought to open Light that Life that was obscurely couched up in Prophecies and Ceremonies, as hid under so many Clouds. O then, let us open our Hearts to him, and entertain these new and fresh Tidings, with new Delights: Though these be now more than sixteen hundred Years old, yet they are still recent to a believing Heart; there is an everlasting Spring in them, that sends out every Day fresh Consolation to Souls, as refreshing as the first Day this Spring was opened. This is the new Wine that never grows old, nay, it is rather every Generation renewed, with the Accession of some new Manifestation of the Love of God. Christ's Incarnation was the first Manifestation of the Sun, the very Morning of Light and Life, the Day-spring visiting the World, that was buried in an hellish Darkness of Heathen-idolatry: And even the Church of God, in the Grave of Superstition, and Corruption of Doctrine and Manners: Then did that *Sun of Righteousness* first set up his Head above the Horizon: but it is but one Day still, he hath been but coming by Degrees to the *Meridian*, and *shining more and more to the perfect Day*; That Sun hath not set since, but made a Course, and gone a round about the World, in the preaching of the Gospel, and brought Life and Light about, by Succession, from one Nation to another, and one Generation to another; and therefore we ought to entertain it this Day with Acclamations and Jubilation of Heart, as the People that ly under the North, do welcome the Sun when it comes once a Year to them. *After that the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour toward Man appeared*, Tit. iii. 4. Φιλανθρωπια, his kindly and affectionate Love to Mankind, that is it that shines so brightly; the Beams of Grace and Love to Men, are the Rays that are scattered from this *Sun of Righteousness*. O the Hardness of Mens Hearts,

Hearts, the impenetrable Obstinacy of Man, that this cannot melt or pierce. How damnable and miserable a Case are they into, who can neither be perswaded with the Eternity of this Subject, to adore it, nor moved with the late Appearance of the Love of God to the World, in sending of his Son? Whom neither Christ's Majesty, nor his Humility, can draw. Certainly this makes Sinners under the Gospel, in a more deplorable Condition than *Sodom*; because *if he had not come, they had not had such Sin, but now it is without Excuse*, &c.

SERMON III.

1 John i. 1, 2, 3. *That which we have heard and seen of the Word of Life, declare we unto you*, &c.

THINGS that are excellent in themselves, will be loved for themselves; but they become the more suitable Object of Affection, if they have withal some Suitableness and Conveniency to us: Yet neither the Excellency, nor Conveniency of the Object, is sufficient to engage the Heart, if there be not something in the Mind too, suitable to the Object; that is, the Apprehension of that Reality and Good that is in it: for, as there is a Certainty in the Object, that makes it a real, not imaginary Thing; so there must be a Certainty in the Subject, whereby the Thing is apprehended to be true, good, and excellent; and then the Object of Affection is compleated. Some Things there are in Nature, excellent in themselves, but they rather beget Admiration than Affection, because they are not suitable to our Necessities: Other Things of a more ordinary Purchase have some Conveniency to supply our Wants; and though they be less worth in their own Nature than precious Stones, and such like; yet they are more desired. But there is this lamentable Disproportion betwixt our Apprehensions, and the Things themselves, which is the Ground of much Disappointment; and so of Vexation. The Things of this World having nothing of that solid Excellency, or true Worth, and Conveniency to our Souls, nothing suitable to our immortal Spirits; but being empty vain Shadows, and windy Husks, instead of substantial true Food; yet there are high Apprehensions, and big Conceits of them, which is a kind of monstruous Production, or empty swelling of the Mind; which because it hath no Bottom of Solidity, it will fall and evanish. Again, take a View of spiritual Things, holden out in the Gospel, and there is as incongruous and unproportioned Carriage of our Hearts towards them; they have a Certainty and Reality and Subsistance in themselves, they alone are excellent, and suitable to our Spirits; notwithstanding, the Mind of Man is hugely mis-

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ſhapen towards them by Unbelief, and hath nothing in his Apprehenſion ſuitable to the Things themſelves: They are repreſented as far below their true Worth, as Things temporal above their juſt Value; and therefore Men are not enamoured with them, Souls are not raviſhed after that Beauty that is in them.

Now the End of theſe Words read, is to reform this irregular, diſorderly Poſture of our Minds, to hold out to you Things truly excellent, and exceedingly convenient, Things good and profitable, in the moſt ſuperlative Degree, in the higheſt Rank that your Imagination can ſuppoſe; and then to perſwade you, that you are not deceived with vain Words, or fair Promiſes, but that there is a certain Truth, and an infallible Reality in them, that you being aſcertained in your Souls, according the Certainty of the Thing preſented, you may then freely, without any Reſerve, give your Hearts to love, imbrace, and follow them. O that there might be ſuch a Meeting between your Hearts and this *eternal Life*, that as he hath come near to us, to be ſuitable to us, your Apprehenſions might draw near to be ſuitable to him; and by this Means, your Souls might meet immediately with *that Word of Life*, and have that conſtant Fellowſhip with him, that is ſpoken of, *Verſe* 3. So your Joy ſhould be full. For Joy is but the full Peace of the Deſires; fill up all the Wants of the Heart, and then it is full of Joy. And ſo, when ſuch a ſatisfying Object is pitched on, as doth exactly correſpond, and anſwer the inward Apprehenſions of the Mind; then there is no more Room in the Heart for any other Thing: As if two Superfices were exactly plain and ſmooth, they could join ſo cloſly together, that no Air could come between them, and then they could hardly be pull'd aſunder.

We ſpoke ſomething of the Excellency of that *Word of Life* in himſelf, and it is but little that is ſaid, when all is ſaid, in Reſpect of that which he truly is; but I fear we ſpeak, and ye hear more of theſe Things, than either of us lively and affectionately apprehend, or lay up in our Hearts. I fear, that as we ſay leſs than is, ſo more than we think; I mean, ſeriouſly think upon. But we ſhall proceed; ſuch an everlaſting glorious Perſon, though he have Life in himſelf, tho' he be never ſo excellent, as *the Son of God*, yet what is that to us? It ſeems he is never a whit nearer us, or not more ſuitable to reſtore us, than the very Majeſty that we offended. How far is he without our Sight, and without our Comprehenſion? He is high as Heaven, who ſhall aſcend to bring down that *eternal Life* to us? But ſtay and conſider, that he is not only ſo glorious in himſelf, but ſo gracious to us; he is not only inviſible, as God, but manifeſted to our Senſes, as Man: Not only hath Life in himſelf, but is an everlaſting Spring of Life to us; not only hath his Throne in Heaven with his Father, but hath come down to the World, to bring that eternal Life near us, even in our Mouth and Hearts; to preach it, to purchaſe it, to ſeal it, and to beſtow it, and *the Life was manifeſted: The Life*, and that *eternal Life*, Words of Force, that have ſome Emphaſis in them: *the Life* is much, that *eternal Life* is more; and yet theſe had been little to us, if not manifeſted to us: Life might have remained hid in God, eternal Life might have reſided in Chriſt the Fountain for all Eternity, and nothing diminiſhed of their Happineſs, if theſe had never ſprung out and vented themſelves; if that Life that was with the Fa-

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ther from the Beginning, had never come down from the Father, we would have missed it, not they; we alone had been miserable by it: Well then, there is a Manifestation of Life in Christ's low Descent to Death; there is a Manifestation of the Riches of Love and Grace in the Poverty and Emptiness of our Saviour, and thus he is suited to us and our Necessities every Way fitly correspondent: And now it is not only, *as the Father hath Life in himself, so the Son hath Life in himself*; but there is a Derivation of that Life to Man; that Donation of Life to the Son, *Joh.* v. 26. was not so much for any need he had of it, as by him to bestow it on us, that it might be, *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: So he that eats me, even he shall live by me*, Joh. vi. 57. As Parents that retain Affection to their Children, albeit they have committed great Injuries, for which they are driven out of their Houses, yet they will, as it were, underhand bestow upon them, and exercise that same Love in a covered Way, by a third Person, by giving to them, to impart to their Children. Notwithstanding this halts too much, for our Father dissembles not his Love, but proclaims it in sending his Son: Nor doth Christ hide it, but declares, that he is instructed with sufficient Furniture for eternal Life, that himself is the *Bread of Life sent from Heaven*, that whosoever receiveth it with Delight, and ponders, and meditates on it in the Heart, and so digests it in their Souls, they shall find a quickning, quieting, comforting, and strengthning Vertue in him. Nay, there is a strait Connexion between his Life and ours, *Because I live, ye shall live also*; as if he could no more want us, than his Father can want him, *Joh.* xiv. 19. And as if he could be no more happy without us, than his Father without him. And whence is it come to pass, but from his Manifestation for this very End and Purpose? How should such strange Logick hold? Whence such a because? If this had not been all his Errand into the World, for which his Father dispensed to want him, as it were, and he did likewise condescend to leave his Father for a Season. And now this being the Business he came about, it is strange he appeared in so unsuitable and unlikely a Form, in Weakness, Poverty, Misery, Ignominy, and all the Infirmities of our Flesh; which seemed rather contrary to his Design, and to indispose him for giving Life to others, whose Life was a continued Death in the Eyes of Men; and the last Act of the Scene seems to blow up the whole Design of quickning dead Sinners; when he who was designed Captain of Salvation, is killed himself: For if he save not himself, how should he save others? And yet behold the infinite Wisdom, Power, and Grace of God, working under Ground, giving Life to the dead, by the Death of Life itself; saving those that are lost, by one that lost himself: Overcoming the World by Weakness; conquering Satan by suffering, triumphing over Death by dying. Like that renowned King of the *Lacedemonians*, who (when he heard of an Oracle, that if the General were saved alive, the Army could not be victorious) changed his Habit, and went among the Camp of his Enemies, and fought valiantly till he was killed; whom when the Armies of the Enemies understood to be the King and General, they presently lost their Hearts, and retired and fled: So our Saviour, and Captain of our Salvation, hath offered himself once for all; and by being killed, hath purchased *Life* to all that believe in his Death, and that *eternal Life*: There-

fore, he is not only the *Word of Life* in himself, and that eternal Life in an essential manner, but he alone *hath the Words of eternal Life*, and is the alone Fountain of Life to us.

Now for the Certainty of this Manifestation of *the Word of Life* in our Flesh, both that he was Man, and that he was more than a Man, even God: This, I say, we have the greatest Evidence of, that the World can afford, next to our own seeing and handling. To begin with the Testimony set down here, of these who were Ear and Eye-witnesses of all; which if they be Men of Credit, cannot but make a great Impression of Faith upon others. Consider who the Apostles were, Men of great Simplicity, whose Education was so mean, and Expectations in the World so low, that they could not be supposed to conspire together to a Falshood; and especially when there was no worldly Inducement leading them thereto, but rather all Things perswading to the contrary: Their very Adversaries could never object any Thing against them, but Want of Learning, and Simplicity, which are furthest from the Suspicion of Deceitfulness. Now how were it possible, think you, that so many thousands every where, should have received this new Doctrine, so unsuitable to humane Reason, from their Mouths, if they had not perswaded them that themselves were Eye-witnesses of all these Miracles that he did, to confirm his Doctrine, and that this Testimony had been above all imaginable Exception? Yea, so evident was it in matter of Fact, that both Enemies themselves confessed, the *Jews* and *Gentiles* that persecuted that Way, were constrained, through the Evidence of the Truth, to acknowledge, that such mighty Works shewed forth themselves in him, though they out of Malice imputed it to ridiculous and blasphemous Causes: And besides, the Apostle used to provoke to the very Testimony *of 500, who had seen Jesus rise from Death*, which is not the Custom of Liars, neither is it possible for so many, as it were, of Purpose, to conspire to such an Untruth, as had so many Miseries and Calamities following on the Profession of it, 1 *Cor.* xv. 6.

But what say they? *That which we have heard of*, not only from the Prophets, who have witnessed of him from the Beginning, and do all conspire together to give a Testimony that he is the Saviour of the World: But from *John*, who was his Messenger, immediately sent before his Face, and whom all Men, even Christ's Enemies, acknowledged to be a Prophet; and therefore, his visible pointing out the Lamb of God, his declaring how near he was, and preferring of him infinitely before himself, who had so much Authority himself, (and so is likely to have spoken the Truth; being misled with no Ambition or Affectation of Honour,) his instituting a new Ordinance, plainly pointing out the Messiah at the Doors, and publishing constantly that Voice, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*: These we and all the People have heard, and heard, not with Indignation, but with Reverence and Respect. But above all, we heard himself, the true Prophet, and sweet Preacher of *Israel*; since the first Day he began to open his Mouth in the Ministry of the Gospel, we have with attentive Ears, and earnest Hearts, received all from his Mouth, and laid up these golden Sayings in our Hearts. He did not constrain them to abide with him, but there was a secret Power that went from him, that chained them to him inevitably, *Lord, whither shall we go from thee, for thou hast the Words*

Words of eternal Life? O! that was an attractive Vertue, a powerful conserving Vertue, that went out of his Mouth. We heard him, say they, and we never heard any speak like him, not so much for the Pomp and Majesty of his Stile, for he came low, sitting on an Ass, and was as condescending in his Manner of Speech as in his other Behaviour: But because *he taught with Authority*; there was a divine Vertue in his Preaching; some Sparkles of a divine Spirit and Power in his Discourses broke out from under the Plainness and Simplicity of it; and made our Souls truly to apprehend of him what was sacrilegiously attributed in flattery to a Man, *the Voice of God, and not of Man.* We heard him so many Years speak familiarly to us, and with us, by which we were certainly perswaded he was a true Man; and then we heard him in his Speeches open the hidden Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, revealing the Will of the Father, which no Man could know, but he that was with the Father, and came down from him: We heard him unfolding all these Shadows and Coverings of the Old Testament, expounding *Moses* and the Prophets, taking off the Vail, and uncovering the Ark and Oracles: And *how did our Hearts burn within us, while he talked with us, and opened to us the Scriptures?* We heard him daily in the Synagogues expound the Scriptures, whereof himself was the living Commentary, when he read them; we saw the true Exposition before our Eyes.

Now, my Beloved, you may be admitted to hear him too, for the Sum of the living Words that came from the *Word of Life* are written; his Sermons are abridged in the Evangelists, that you may read them, and when you read them, think within your self, that you hear his holy Mouth speak them. Set your selves, as amongst his Disciples, *that so ye may believe, and believing may have eternal Life*; for this End are they written, *Joh.* xx. 30, 31.

SERMON IV.

1 John i. 1, 2. —*which we have heard and seen*, &c.

THERE is a Gradation of Certainty here; hearing himself speak, is more than hearing by Report; but an Eye-witness is better than ten Ear-witnesses, and handling adds a third Assurance; for the Sense of touching gives the last and greatest Evidence of Truth. It is true, that the Sense is properly correspondent to sensible Things, and of it self can only give Testimony to his Humanity; yet I conceive these are here alledged for both, even also to witness his glorious and Divine Nature; which though it did not fall under Sight and Handling, yet it discovered it self to be latent, under that visible Covering of

Fleſh, by ſenſible Effects, no leſs, than the Spirit of Man which is inviſible, manifeſts its Preſence in the Body, by ſuch Operations ſenſible, as can proceed from no other Principle: And therefore, this faithful Witneſs adds, *Which we have looked upon*; which relates not only to the outward Attention of the Eyes, but points at the inward Intention, and Affection of the Heart. Our Senſes did bring in ſuch ſtrange and marvellous Objects to our Minds, that we ſtood gazing, and beheld it over and over again, looked upon it with Reaſon, concluding what it might be; we gave Intertainment to our Minds, to conſider it wiſely and deliberately, and faſtned our Eyes, that we might detain our Hearts, in the Conſideration of ſuch a glorious Perſon. From this then ye have two Things clear; one is, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was a true Man, and that his Diſciples had all poſſible Evidence of it, which the Hiſtory more abundantly ſhews; he converſed with them familiarly, he eat and drank with them, yea, his Converſation in the World, was very much condeſcending in outward Behaviour, to the Cuſtoms of the World; he eat with Phariſees, when they invited him, he refuſed not; but he was more bold with Publicans and Sinners, to converſe with them; as being their greateſt Friend: He was uncivil to none; would deter none through a rigid auſtere Converſation; and indeed, to teſtify the Truth of his human Nature, he came ſo low to partake of all humane Infirmities without Sin, and to be ſubject to extraordinary Afflictions and Croſſes, as to the Eyes of the World it did quite extinguiſh his Divine Glory, and bury it in Misbelief. This which we ſpeak of, as a Teſtimony and Evidence that he was Man, was the very grand ſtumbling-block and Offence of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; which they made Uſe of as an Evidence and certain Teſtimony that he was not God: The Evidence of the one ſeems to give in Evidence to the other. But let us conſider this, for it is a ſweet and pleaſant Subject, if our Hearts were ſuitably framed to delight in it, that there was as much Evidence to the Conviction of all Mens Senſes, of his Divine Majeſty, as of his Humane Infirmity: And that there are two concurring Evidences, which enlightens one another; which we ſhall ſhew, partly from his own Works and Miracles, and partly from the more than miraculous Succeſs and Progreſs of the Goſpel after him.

For the firſt; *John* teſtifies, that not only they ſaw the Baſeneſs of his outward Shape, but *the Glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace and Truth*, Joh. i. 14. *John* the *Baptiſt* ſent ſome of his Diſciples, becauſe of their own Unbelief, to enquire at Jeſus, *Art thou he, or look we for another*? And what Anſwer gave he them? What Reaſon to convince them? *Go* (ſaith he) *and tell what ye have ſeen and heard, that the Blind ſee, the Lame walk, and the Lepers are cleanſed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are raiſed, and the Poor receive the Goſpel*: And bleſſed is he who ever ſhall not for my outward Unſeemlineſs and Baſeneſs offend, but go by that, into the Glory that ſhines out in ſuch Works. It is ſaid in *Luke* vii. 21. That *the ſame Hour he cured many*. Before he ſpoke in anſwer, he anſwered them by his Deeds; he gave a viſible Demonſtration of that they doubted of; for they could not but ſee a Power above created Power in theſe Works, which ſurpaſs Nature and Art. So many wonderful Works done, ſo often repeated, before

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so many Thousands, even many of his watchful and observant Enemies; and all done so easily, by a Word, infinite Cures for Number and Quality wrought, which passed the Skill of all Physicians; Devils dispossessed, Life restored, Water converted into excellent Wine, without the Maturation of the Sun, or Help of the Vine Tree: A little Bread so strangely enlarged to the Satisfaction of many Thousands, and more remaining than was laid down: The Winds and Seas obeying his very Word, and composing themselves to Silence at his Rebuke, and infinite more of this Kind. Are they not in the common Apprehension of Men, of a Degree superior to that of Nature? Who could restore Life, but he that gave it? Whom would the Devils obey, but him at whom they tremble? Who could transubstantiate Water into Wine, but he that created both these Substances; and every Year by a long Circuit of the Operations of Nature, turns it into Wine? Who could feed Seven Thousand with that which a few Persons would exhaust, but he that can create it of nothing, and by whose Word all this visible World started out of nothing? Nay, let us suppose these Things to be done only by divine Assistance, by some peculiar divine Influence; then certainly, if we consider the very End of this miraculous Assistance of a Creature, that it was to confirm the Doctrine delivered by him, and make such a deep Impression of the Truth of it in the Hearts of all, that it cannot be rooted out. This being the very genuine End of the Wisdom of God in such Works, it must needs follow, that all that which Christ revealed, both of himself and the Father, of his own being with him from the Beginning, of his being one with him, and being his eternal Son; all this must needs be infallibly true; for it is not supposible to agree with the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to manifest so much of his infinite Power and Glory, in so extraordinary a Manner, to bear Testimony to an Impostor or Deceiver. Therefore, though no more could be at first extorted from an Enemy of Christ's Doctrine, but that such mighty Works did shew forth themselves, which could not be done, but by the Divine Assistance and extraordinary Help of God: Yet, even from that Confession it may be strongly concluded, that seeing there was no other End imaginable of such extraordinary Assistance, but the Confirmation of his new Doctrine, and that of his divine Nature, being one of the chief Points of it, it must needs inforce, that he was not only helped by God, as *Moses*, but that he was God, and did these Things by his own Power. By this then it appears, that though after so many Prophesies of him, and Expectations from the Beginning, we see but a Man, in outward Appearance despisable, and *without Comliness and Form*; yet if we could open the Eyes of our Souls, and fix them upon him, we behold, as through some small Crainies, Majesty shining in his Misery, Power discovering it self in his Weakness, even that Power that made the World, and Man too. He was born indeed, yet of a Virgin, he was weak and infirm himself, yet he healed all others Infirmities, even by his Word: He was often an hungred, yet he could feed Five Thousand at one Time, and Seven Thousand at another, upon that which would not have served his Disciples, or but served them: He was wearied with Travels, yet he gave Rest to wearied Souls. At length himself died, and that an ignominious Death, notwithstanding he raised

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the Dead by his Word, and at length he raiſeth himſelf by his own Power. All this is included in this, *We have ſeen and handled*; we ſaw him glorioufly tranſfigured on the Mount, where *his Countenance did ſhine as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as Light*, and Two, the greateſt Perſons in the Old Teſtament, came out of Heaven, as it were, to yield up the Adminiſtration of Shadows to his Subſtance. And we ſaw the Heaven opening in the Sight of many Thouſands, and heard a Teſtimony given him from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son, hear him.* And then, when he was buried, and our Hope with him, we ſaw him riſen again, and our Hope did riſe with him, and then ſome of us handled his Sides, to get full Perſwaſion; and all of us eat and drank, and converſed with him Forty Days. And to make a Period, at length we ſaw him aſcending up to Heaven, and a Cloud receiving him as a Chariot, to take him out of our Sight. Thus, *the Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt among us, and we have ſeen his Glory, as of the only begotten Son of God.*

But beſides that which the Life and Death of Jeſus Chriſt carries ingraven in it of Divinity, there is one Miracle, which may be ſaid to tranſcend all that ever was done, and it is one continued Wonder ſince his *Reſurrection*, even the Vertue and Power of that crucified *Saviour* to conquer the World, by ſuch unſuitable, yea, contrary Means and Inſtruments. Heatheniſh Religion was ſpread indeed univerſally through the World, but that was not one Religion, but one Name; for as many Nations, as many fancied gods, and in one Nation many. And true it is, that *Mahometaniſm* hath ſpread it ſelf far; but by what Means? Only by the Power of the Sword, and the Terror of an Empire. But here is a Doctrine contrary to all the received Cuſtoms, and inbred Opinions of Men, without any ſuch Means prevailing throughout the World. *Cyrus*, when he was about to conquer neighbouring Nations, gave out a Proclamation, *If any will follow me, if he be a Foot-man, I will make him an Horſe-man, if he have a Village, I will give him a City, if a City, I will beſtow on him a Country*, &c. Now mark how contrary the Proceeding of our Lord is: *Go and preach*, (ſaith he) *repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at Hand.* Here is his Proclamation, *repent ye.* And, *if any Man will be my Diſciple, let him take up his Croſs and follow me, and deny himſelf.* What diſproportioned Means? And yet how infinitely greater Succeſs? *Cyrus* could not gain the *Lacedemonians* to his Side for all that, but Chriſt, though poor, deſpiſed and contemptible, while alive, and at length thought to be quite vanquiſhed by the moſt ſhamefui Death, when he is lift up upon the Croſs, to the View and Reproach of the World, he draws all Men after him. He, by a few Fiſher-men not Commanders, nor Orators, perſwades the World, and within a few Years, that crucified Lord is adored further and wider than any Empire did ever ſtretch it ſelf. All the Power, Majeſty and Succeſs of *Alexander*, could never perſwade the Nations, no, not his own Followers to adore him as God: But here one nailed to the Croſs, crowned with Thorns, rejected of all Men, and within a little Space, adored, worſhipped, ſuffered for throughout the Nations, yea, Kings and Emperors caſting down their Crowns at his Feet, many Thouſands counting it their Honour to die upon that Account.

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And do not the Trophies of these Apostolick Victories remain to this Day, in every Corner of the World, after so many Hundred Years, in so many different, and so far distant Nations; that same Name preached, and all Knees bowing to it? These Things considered, how much done, and by Means worse than nothing, it transcends all the Miracles that ever the World wondered at. Now, my Beloved, these Things I mention for this End, that ye may be perswaded upon sure Grounds, that he who is preached unto you, is *God able to save you*, and according to the Evidence of these Grounds, ye may believe in him, and give that cordial Assent to these everlasting Truths, and that welcome Entertainment to him in your Heart that becomes. I think certainly there is very little, even of this solid Assent and Perswasion of the Gospel, in the Hearts of the most Part; because they take Things or Names rather implicitely, and never seriously consider what they believe, and upon what Grounds. But I know not a more pleasant and profitable Meditation than this, if we would enter in a serious Consideration of the Truth and Certainty of these Things we have received. O how would such Evidence open the Heart to an entire and full Closure with them, and Embracement of them.

SERMON V.

1 John i. 3. *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have Fellowship with us,* &c.

THere are many Things that you may desire to hear, and it may be are usually spoken of in Publick, which the Generality of Mens Hearts are more carried after; but truly, I should wrong my self and you both, if I should take upon me to discourse in these Things, which it may be some desire, for Direction or Information concerning the Times: For I can neither speak of them with so much Certainty of Perswasion as were needful, nor can I think it an Advantage, to shut out and exclude this which the Apostle takes to declare, as the chief Subject of his Writing, which must needs be, if such Things have Place. Therefore I choise rather with the Apostle to declare this unto you, which I can always do with a like Certainty, and certainly might always be done to an infinite greater Advantage. There are these two peculiar Excellencies in the Gospel or *Word of Life*, that it is never unprofitable, nor unseasonable; but doth contain in it at all Times, the greatest Advantage to the Souls of Men, of infinite more Concern-

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ment and Urgency, than any other Thing can be ſuppoſed to be. And then we have no doubtful Diſputations about it; it varies not by Times and Circumſtances, it may be declared with the ſame full Aſſurance at all Times, which certainly can not be attained in other Things. I would gladly know what *Paul* meant, when he ſaid, *He determined to know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 2. and *that he counted all Droſs and Dung to the ſuper-excellent Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil. iii. 8. Sure it muſt amount to ſo much at leaſt, that this ſhould be the ordinary Subject of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, ſince they are the Ambaſſadors of Jeſus Chriſt, not the Orators of the State. Should not all other Things be thought impertinent and trivial in reſpect of this, the Salvation of Sinners? And what hath a Connexion with that, but *Jeſus Chriſt*, and *the Word of Life?*

But though this be the moſt pleaſant and profitable ſubject, yet I fear, that few of them who pretend a Calling to this Embaſſage, are thus qualified and diſpoſed to ſpeak and declare it; as the Apoſtle imports, *That which we have heard and ſeen*, &c. It is true, there was ſomething extraordinary in this, becauſe they were to be firſt Publiſhers of this Doctrine, and to wreſtle againſt the Rebellion of Mens Hearts, and the Idolatry and Superſtition of the World: Yea, to undertake ſuch a Work, as to ſubdue all Nations by the preaching of a crucified Man to them, which ſeemed to Reaſon, the moſt deſperate and impoſſible Employment ever given or taken. Therefore it behoved them to be the Eye and Ear Witneſſes of his Doctrine, Life, Miracles, and all; that being themſelves perſuaded beyond all the Degrees of Certainty that Reaſon can afford, they might be the more confident and able to convince and perſuade others. But yet there is ſomething that holds by good Proportion, that he that declares this eternal Life to others, ſhould be well acquainted with it himſelf. He that preaches Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould firſt be converſant with him, and become his Diſciple and Follower, before they can with any Fruit become Teachers of others. Therefore the Apoſtles, *Acts* i. *chooſeth out one that had been with them from the Beginning, gone in and out with them, ſeen and heard all.* O! how incongruous is it for many of us, to take upon us to declare this unto others, which I fear, few can ſay they have heard and ſeen in a ſpiritual Manner, and handled by Experience? No Queſtion, it prevails uſually moſt with the Heart, that comes from the Heart. Affection is the Fire that is moſt ſuitable to ſet Affection on Flame. It is a great Addition to a Man's Power and Virtue of perſuading others, to have a full Perſuaſion ſettled in his own Heart concerning theſe Things. Now it is much to be lamented, that there is ſo little of this, and ſo few carries the Evidence on their Hearts and Ways, that they have been with Jeſus, converſant in his Company. I cannot ſay, but the Ordinances, that carry their Worth and Dignity from God, and not from Men, ſhould be notwithſtanding precious to your Hearts; and that *Word of Life*, however, and by whomſoever ſent, to you it be ſpoken, it ſhould be ſuitably received with Gladneſs of Heart. But I confeſs, there is much of the Succeſs diſappointed, by the unſuitable Carriage and Diſpoſition of Inſtruments, which ought to be mourned under, as the greateſt Judgment of this Nation.

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Two Principles hath acted this divine Apostle, the exceeding Love of his Master, for he loved much, as he was much beloved; and this carries him on all Occasions to give so hearty a Testimony to him, as you see, *Joh.* xxi. 24. he characterizeth himself, or circumscribes his own Name thus; *This is the Disciple that testifieth these Things, and wrote these Things, and we know his Testimony is true.* Where that divine Love, which is but the Result and Overflowing of the Love Christ carries to us, fills the Heart: This makes the sweetest Vent, and most fragrant Opening of the Mouth, whether in Discourse, or in Prayer, or Preaching than can be. O how it perfumes all the Commendation of Christ; *Peter, lovest thou me? Feed my Sheep.* These have a natural Connexion together, the Love of Christ in the Heart, and the affectionate hearty serious Declaration of him to others. And then, another Principle hath moved him, the Love of others Salvation. *These Things I declare, that ye may have Fellowship with us*; finding in his own Experience how happy he was, what a Pearl he had found, how rare a Jewel, *eternal Life*, he cannot hide it, but proclaims it. His next Wish is, now since I am thus blessed, O that all the World knew, and would come and share with me; I see that unexhausted Fountain of Life, that unemptiable Sea of Goodness, that infinite Fulness of Grace in Jesus Christ, that I, and you, and all that will, may come and be satisfied, and nothing diminished. There is that immense Fulness in spiritual Things, that Superabundance, and infinite Excess over our Necessities, that they may be enjoyed by many, by all, without Envy or Discontent, without Prejudice to one anothers Fulness, which the Scantness and Meanness of created Things cannot admit. I believe, if Ministers or Christians did taste of this, and had Access into it to see it, and bless themselves in it; if they might enter into this Treasury, or converse into this Company, they would henceforth carry themselves as those who pity the World, and compassionate Mankind. A Man that were acquainted with this that is in Christ, would not find his Heart easily stirred up to Envy, or provocked upon others Prosperity or Exaltation, but rather he would be constrained to commiserate all others, that they will not know nor consider wherein their own true Tranquility and absolute Satisfaction consists. He that is lifted up to this blessed Society, to converse with God, were it not for the Compassion and Mercy he owes to miserable Mankind, he might laugh at the Folies and Vanities of the World, as we do at Children. But as the φιλανθρωπια, the affectionate kind Love our Saviour carried to human Nature, made him often groan and sigh for his Adversaries, and weep over *Jerusalem*, albeit his own Joy was full, without Ebb: So in some Measure a Christian learns of Christ to be a Lover and Pitier of Mankind, and then to be moved with Compassion towards others, when we have fullest Joy and Satisfaction our selves. O that we might be persuaded to seek after these Things which may be gotten and kept without Clamour and Contention, about which there needs be no Strife nor Envy. O! seek that Happiness in Fellowship with God, which, having attained, you lack nothing but that others may be as happy.

These Things I declare, that ye may have Fellowship with us. Oh! that Ministers of the Gospel might say so, and might from their own Experience invite

others to partake with them, as *Paul* requeſts others to be Followers of him, as he was of Chriſt; ſo theſe who ſucceed *Paul* in this Embaſſage of Reconciliation, and are ſent to call to the Feaſt, might upon good Ground interpoſe their own Experience thus. O! come and eat with us; O! come and ſhare with us, for it will ſuffice us all without Diviſion. When ſome get into the Favour of great and eminent Perſons, and have the Honour to be their Companions, they will be very loath to invite promiſcuouſly others to that Dignity, this Society would beget Competition and Emulation. But, O! of how different a Nature is this Fellowſhip? which whoſoever is exalted to, he hath no other Grief, but that his poor Brethren and Fellow-creatures either know not, or will not be ſo happy: Therefore he will always be about the declaring of this to others. But if Miniſters cannot uſe ſuch an Expreſſion to invite you to their Fellowſhip, yet I beſeech you, Beloved in the Lord, let all of us be here invited by the Apoſtle to partake of that, which will not grieve you to have Fellows and Companions into, but rather add to your Contentment.

Moreover, this may be repreſented to you, that ye are invited to the very Communion with the Apoſtles, the loweſt and meaneſt amongſt you hath this high Dignity in your Offer, to be Fellow-citizens with the Saints, with the eminent Pillars of the Church, the Apoſtles.

It might be thought by the moſt Part of Chriſtians, who are more obſcure, little known, and almoſt deſpiſed in the World, that they might not have ſo near Acceſs into the Court of this great King: Some would think theſe who continued with him in his Temptations, who waited on his own Perſon, and were made ſuch glorious Inſtruments of the Renovation of the World, ſhould have ſome great Preference to all others, and be admitted into the Fellowſhip of *the Father* and *the Son*, beyond others; even as many would think, that Chriſt's Mother and Kinſmen in the Fleſh, ſhould have had Prerogatives and Privileges beyond all his Followers. But, O! the wonderful Myſtery of the equal, free, and irreſpective Conveyance of this Grace of the Goſpel in Chriſt Jeſus! *Neither bond nor free, neither Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion.* There is *one common Salvation*, Jude *ver.* 3. as well as *common Faith*, Tit. i. 4. and it is common to Apoſtles, to Paſtors, to People, *to as many as ſhall believe in his Name*; ſo that the pooreſt and meaneſt Creature is not excluded from the higheſt Privileges of Apoſtles. We have that to glory into, in which *Paul* gloried, that is, *the Croſs of Chriſt*. We have the ſame Acceſs, by the ſame Spirit, unto the Father; we have the ſame Advocate to plead for us, the ſame Blood to cry for us, the ſame Hope of the ſame Inheritance. In a Word, *we are baptized into one Body*, and for the Eſſentials and chief Subſtantials of Privilege and Comfort, the Head equally reſpects all the Members. Yea, the Apoſtles, though they had ſome peculiar Gifts and Privileges beyond others, yet they were forbidden to rejoice in theſe, but rather in theſe which were common to them with other Saints. *Rejoice not* (ſaith Chriſt) *that the Spirits are ſubject unto you, but rather rejoice becauſe your Names are written in Heaven*, Luke x. 20. The Height and Depth of this drowns all other Differences.

Now, my Beloved, what can be more ſaid for our Comfort? Would you be as happy as *John*, as bleſſed as *Paul*? Would

Would you think your selves well, if it were possible, to be in as near Relation and Communion with Christ as his Mother and Brethren? Truly, that is not only possible, but it is holden out to you, and you are requested to embrace the Offer, and come and share with them. *He that heareth my Words and doth them, the same is my Mother, and Sister, and Brother:* You shall be as dear to him as his dearest Relations, if you believe in him, and receive his Sayings in your Heart. Do not then entertain jealous and suspicious Thoughts, because you are not like Apostles or such holy Men as are recorded in Scripture? If you forsake not your own Mercy, you may have Fellowship with them in that which they account their chiefest Happiness. There is no Difference of Quality or Condition, no Distance of other Things, can hinder your Communion with them. There are several Sizes and Growths of Christians, both in Light and Grace, some have extraordinary Raptures and Extasies of Joy and Sweetness; others attain not to that, but are rather kept in Attendance and Waiting on God in his Ways; but all of them have one common Salvation; as the highest have some Fellowship with the lowest in his Infirmities; so the lowest hath Fellowship with the highest in his Privileges. Such is the infinite Goodness of God, that which is absolutely necessary, and most important either to Soul or Body, is made more universal, both in Nature and Grace, as the common Light of the Sun to all, and the Sun of Righteousness too, in an impartial Way, shining on all them that come to him.

SERMON VI.

1 Joh. i. 3. —— *And truly our Fellowship is with the Father and the Son,* &c.

IT was both the great Wisdom and infinite Goodness of God, that he did not only frame a Creature capable of Society with others of his own Kind, but that he fashioned him so, as to be capable of so high an Elevation, to have Communion and Fellowship with himself; it is less Wonder of Angels, because they are pure incorporeal Spirits, drawing towards a nearer Likeness to his Nature, which Similitude is the Ground of Communion; but that he would have one of the material and visible Creatures below, that for the one Half is made of the Dust of the Earth, advanced to this unconceivable Height of Privilege, to have Fellowship with him: This is a greater Wonder; and for this End he breathed into Man a Spirit from Heaven, that might be capable of Conformity and Communion with him, who is *the Father of Spirits.* Now take this in the plainest Apprehension of

it, and you cannot but conceive that this is both the Honour and Happineſs of Man. It is Honour and Dignity, I ſay, becauſe the Nature of that conſiſts in the Applauſe and Eſtimation of thoſe that are worthy, teſtified one Way or another, and the higheſt Degrees of it riſe according to the Degree or Dignity of the Perſons that eſteem us, or give us their Fellowſhip and Favour. Now truly, according to this Rule the Honour is incomparable, and the Credit riſeth infinitely above all the airy and fancied Dignities of Men; for the Foot-ſtool to be elevated up to the Throne, for the poor contemptible Creature to be lifted up to the Society and Friendſhip of the moſt high and glorious God, the only Fountain of all the Hierarchies of Heaven, or Degrees upon Earth: So much as the Diſtance is between God and us, ſo much proportionally muſt the Dignity riſe, to be advanced out of this low Eſtate to Fellowſhip with God. The Diſtance between Creatures is not obſervable in regard of this, and yet poor Worms ſwell, if either they be lifted up a little above others, or advanced to Familiarity with theſe that are above them. But what is it to pride our ſelves in theſe Things? When we are altogether, higher and lower, at one View, as Graſshoppers in his Sight; therefore *Man being in Honour, and underſtanding not* wherein his true Honour and Dignity conſiſts, he aſſociates himſelf to Beaſts; only the Soul, that is aſpiring to this Communion with God, is extracted out of the Dregs of beaſtly Mankind, and is elevated above Mankind, and aſſociated to bleſſed Apoſtles, and holy Angels, and Spirits made perfect: And that were but little, though it be a Honour above Regal or Imperial Dignities; but it is infinitely heightned by this, that their Aſſociation is with *God, the bleſſed and holy Trinity.*

Now herein conſiſts Mans Happineſs too, for the Soul being inlarged in its Capacity and Appetite, far beyond all viſible Things, it is never fully ſatiated, or put to Reſt and Quiet, till it be poſſeſſed with the chiefeſt and moſt univerſal Good, that is, *God*; and then all the Motions of Deſires ceaſe, then the Soul reſts from its Labours, then there is a Peace and eternal Reſt proclaimed in the Deſires of the Soul, *Return unto thy Reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me*, Pſal. cxvi. 7. O! what a poor ſhort *Requiem* do Men ſing to their own Hearts from other Enjoyments? Oftentimes Mens Hearts, whether dreaming or waking, ſpeak in this Manner, *Soul take thy Reſt*; but how ill grounded is that Peace, and how falſe a Reſt, daily Experience in part witneſſeth, and the laſt Day will fully declare? But, O! how much better and wiſer were it for you to ſeek the Favour and Light of his Countenance upon you, and to be united to him who is the Fountain of Life, ſo ye might truly, without Hazard of of ſuch a ſad Reprehenſion as that Fool got, or grievous Diſappointment, ſay, *Soul take thy Reſt in God.*

Man was advanced to this Dignity and Happineſs, but he kept not his Station, for that great Dragon falling down from that Pinacle of Honour he had in Heaven, drew down with him *the third Part of the Stars of Heaven, and caſt them to the Earth:* And thus, Man who was in Honour, is now aſſociated with, and made like to Beaſts or Devils; he is a Stranger to God from the Womb, all the Imaginations of his Heart tend to Diſtance from God, he is exiled and baniſhed from God's Preſence, the Type

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whereof was his being driven out of the Garden; and yet he is not long out, nor far away, when the infinite Love of God, moves a Embassage to send after him and to recall him; many Messengers are sent before-hand to prepare the Way, and to dispose Mens Hearts to Peace; many Prophesies were, and Fore-intimations of that great Embassage of Love, which at length appeared; for *God sent his Son, his own Son*, to take away the Difference, and make up the Distance. And this is the Thing that is declared unto us by these Eye and Ear-witnesses, to this End that we may know how to return to that blessed Society which we had forsaken, to our own eternal Prejudice. Is Man banished out of the Paradise of God into the accursed Earth? Then the Son is sent out from his own Palace and the Paradise above, to come into this World, and to save the World. Is there such a Gulf between us and Heaven? Christ hath put his own Body between, to fill it up. Do the Cherubims watch with flaming Fire to keep us from Life? Then the Son hath shed his own Blood in Abundance, to quench that Fire, and so to pacify and compose all in Heaven and Earth. Is there such Odds and Enmity between the Families of Heaven and Earth? He sent his Son the chief Heir, and married him with our Nature, and in that eternal Marriage of our Nature with him, he hath buried in everlasting Oblivion all the Difference, and opened a Way for a nearer and dearer Friendship with God than was before. And whence was it, I pray you, that God dwelt among Men? first in a Tabernacle, then in a fixed Temple, even among the rebellious Sons of Men; and that so many were admitted and advanced again to Communion with God; *Abraham* had the Honour to be *the Friend of God*, (O incomparable Title! comprehending more than King or Emperor) Was it not all from this, the anticipating Vertue of that uniting and peace-making Sacrifice? It was for his Sake who was to come, and in his Flesh to lay a sure Foundation for eternal Peace and Friendship between God and Man.

Now you see the Ground of our Restitution to that primitive Fellowship with God, my earnest Desire, is that ye would lay Hold on this Opportunity. Is such an high Thing in your Offer? Yea, are you earnestly invited to it by the *Father* and the *Son*? Then sure it might at the first hearing beget some inward Desire, and kindle up some holy Ambition after such a Happiness. Before we know further what is in it, (for the very first Sound of it imports some special and incomparable Privilege) might not our Hearts be inflamed, and ought we not to enquire at our own Hearts, and speak thus unto them, Have I lived so long a Stranger to God the Fountain of my Life? Am I so far bewitched with the deceitful Vanities of the World, as not to think it incomparably better, to rise up above all created Things to communicate with the *Father* and the *Son*? And shall I go hence without God and without Christ, when Fellowship with them is daily, freely, and plentifully holden forth? I beseech you consider where it must begin, and what must be laid down for the Foundation of this Communion, even your Union with Jesus Christ the Mediator between God and Man; and you cannot be one with him, but by forsaking your selves, and believing in him; and thence flows that constant Abode and Dwelling in him, which is the mutual Intertainment of Christ and a Soul, after their Meeting together. *Can-*

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two walk together except they be agreed? We are by Nature Enemies to God; Now certainly Reconciliation and Agreement muſt interveen by the Blood of the Croſs, before any friendly and familiar Society be kept. Let this then be your firſt Study, and it is firſt declared in the Goſpel, Jeſus Chriſt is holden out as partaking with you in all your Infirmities, he is repreſented as having Fellowſhip with us in our Sins and Curſes, in our Afflictions and Croſſes, he hath Fellowſhip in our Nature to bear our Sins and Infirmities. Now, ſince he hath partaken in theſe, you are invited to come and have Fellowſhip with him in his Gifts and Graces, in the precious Merits of his Death and Suffering, in his riſing again and returning to Glory. And this is the Exchange he makes and declares in the Goſpel, I have taken your Sins and Curſes, O come and take my Graces, and that which is purchaſed by my Blood. Now this is the firſt Beginning of a Soul's renewed Fellowſhip with God, and it is the Foundation of all that is to come, to imbrace this Offer, to accept him cordially as he is preſented, and to pacifie and quiet our own Hearts by Faith in that he hath done. And this being once laid down as the Ground-ſtone, the Soul will grow up into more Communion with him.

To ſpeak aright of this Communion would require more Acquaintance with it, than readily will be found amongſt us: But it is more eaſy to underſtand in what it is exerciſed and intertained, than to bring up our Hearts unto it. Certainly it muſt neither be taken ſo low and wide, as if it conſiſted all in theſe external Duties, and Approaches of Men to God; for there is nothing capable of Communion with the *Father of Spirits*, but a *Spirit*; and ſure I am, the moſt Part of us removes them, and acts little that Way. It is a lamentable Thing that Men pretend to pleaſe God with ſuch vain empty Shows, and bodily Appearances, without any ſerious Exerciſe of their Souls, and Attention of their Minds in divine Worſhip. Neither yet muſt it be taken ſo high, and made ſo narrow, as if it conſiſted only in theſe Raviſhments of the Soul after God, which are joined with extraordinary Sweetneſs and Joy, or in ſuch rare Pieces of Acceſs and Liberty; for though that be a Part of it, yet is it neither univerſal to all God's Children, nor yet conſtant in any. There may be ſome ſolid ſerious Attendance on God in his Ordinances, which may have more true ſubſtantial Life in it, and more of the Marrow of Chriſtianity in it, though a Soul ſhould not be acquainted with theſe Raptures, nor ever carried without the Line of an equal walking with God. Therefore that which I would exhort you to, is to acquaint your ſelves with *Jeſus Chriſt*, and you ſhall find a new Way opened in him, by which you may boldly come to God, and having come to God in him, you are called to walk with him, to intertain that Acquaintance that is made, till all the Diſtance and Eſtrangedneſs of your Hearts be worn out. And I know not any Thing which is more apt, either to beget or preſerve this Fellowſhip, than the Communication of your Spirits often with him in Prayer, and with his Word in Meditation; and this is not to be diſcharged as a Cuſtom, but the Love of God within, drawing the Heart willingly towards Communication with him, and conſtraining to pour out your Requeſts to him, and wait on him, even though ye ſhould not find that ſenſible Sweetneſs that ſometimes is found. It were an happy

py Advancement in this Fellowship, if Converse with God, whether in Prayer and solemn Retirements, or in Meditation, or in our ordinary Walking, were become the Delight of our Hearts, at least that they might be carried that Way towards the intertaining the Thoughts of his Majesty, his Glory, and Grace, and Goodness, and Wisdom shining every where, as from a natural Instinct, even when we are not ingaged with the present Allurements of that Sweetness that sometimes accompanies it.

SERMON VII.

1 John i. 3, 4. — *And truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these Things write we unto you, that your Joy may be full.*

IT was Sin that did first break off that Fellowship that was between God and Man, and cut off that blessed Society, in which the Honour and Happiness of Man consisted; but that fundamental Bond being loosed, it hath likewise untyed all the Links of Society of Men among themselves, and made such a general Dispersion and Dissipation of Mankind, that they are almost like wild Beasts, raging up and down; and in this wilder than Beasts, that they devour one another, which Beasts do not in their own Kind; and they are like Fishes of the Sea, without Rule and Government. Though there be some Remnants of a sociable Inclination in all Men, that shews it self in their Combinings in Societies, and erecting Governments; yet generally that which is the true Bond and Ligament of Men, which alone can truly knit them together, is broken, that is *Love, the Love of God and our Neighbours?* And therefore notwithstanding of all the Means used to reduce, and to contain Mankind in Order and Harmony by Government; yet there are nothing but continual Rents, Distractions, Dissipations, Divisions, and Dissolutions in Common-wealths amongst themselves, and between Nations; so that all Men may be represented as Lions, Tigers, Wolves, Serpents, and such like, unsociable Creatures, till the Gospel come to tame and subdue them, as it is often holden out in the Prophets, *Isai.* ii. 4. and xi. 6, 7, 8. and lxv. 25.

Now indeed you have here the express End and Purpose of the Gospel, to make up these two great Breaches in the Creature, between God and Men, and between Men and Men. It is a Gospel of Peace; where ever it takes Hold of Mens Spirits, it reduceth all to a peaceable Temper, joins them to God, and one to another: For the very Sum and Substance of it is the Love of God to Mankind, and proposed

poſed for this End, to engage the Love of Man again; and Love is the Glew, the Cement that alone will conjoin Hearts unto this Fellowſhip. It is a ſtrange Thing, and much to be lamented, that Chriſtendom ſhould be *a Field of Blood*, an *Aceldama*, beyond other Places of the World: That where the Goſpel is pretended to be received, that Men have ſo far put off even Humanity, as thus to bite and devour one another. Certainly it is, becauſe where it is preached, it is not believed: Therefore, *Sin taketh Occaſion by it to become the more ſinful*; always let us take heed to this, that it is the great Purpoſe and grand Deſign of the Goſpel preached to us, to reſtore us to a bleſſed Society and Fellowſhip with the Father, and withal, to a ſweet Fellowſhip amongſt our ſelves; for both you ſee are here.

We are called to Fellowſhip with the Father, and what is that? But to have the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt thy Father, and thou to be his Son by Adoption of Grace: It is certainly the very Marrow and Extract of the whole Covenant, and all the Promiſes thereof, *I will be your Father, and ye ſhall be my Sons and Daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty*, 2 Cor. vi. 18. *I go* (ſaith Chriſt) *to your Father and my Father, and to your God and my God*. O what a ſweet Complication and Interchange of Relations, *Joh.* xx. 17.

I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my People; here is the Epitome of all Happineſs and Felicity; in this Word all is incloſed, and without this nothing is to be found that deſerves the Deſires of an immortal Spirit. For hence it follows, that a Soul is filled with *the All-fulneſs of God*, Eph. iii. 19. for that is made over to thee who believes the Goſpel, and thou haſt as real a Right and Title to it, as Men have to their Fathers Inheritance. Then to have Fellowſhip with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, is another Branch of this Dignity; and this is that which introduceth the other; Chriſt is the middle Perſon, the Mediator between God and Man, given for this End, to recover Men from their woful Diſperſion, and Separation from God, and reduce them again to that bleſſed Society: And therefore our Acquaintance, as it were, firſt begins with him, and by him we are led to the Father, *No Man can come to the Father but by the Son*: Therefore, if you have his Friendſhip, you have done the Buſineſs, for *he and his Father is one*.

Now this Fellowſhip, to branch it forth more particularly, is either real, or perſonal: Real, I mean, κοινωνεα *Bonorum*, a Communion of all good Things, a Communion with him in his Nature, Offices, and Benefits; and this muſt be laid down as the Foundation-ſtone of this Fellowſhip, he came near us, to partake of Fleſh and Blood with us, that we might have a Way, a new and living Way conſecrated, even *the Vail of his Fleſh*, to come to God by; for certainly this gives Boldneſs to a Soul to draw near to God, with ſome Expectation of Succeſs and Acceptation, when it is ſeriouſly conſidered, that our Nature is ſo nearly conjoined already to God; by this Step a Soul climbs up to the Majeſty of God; and by Means of this, *we become Partakers of the divine Nature*, as God of humane Nature, 2 *Pet.* i. 4. So by the ſame Degrees we aſcend to God, that God hath deſcended to us; he drew near us by our Nature, and we by the Intervention of that ſame aſcend to him, and receive his Image and Stamp on our Souls: For the Lord did ſtamp his own Image upon

pon Christ's humane Nature, to make it a Pattern to us, and to represent to us, as in a visible Symbol and Pledge, what Impression he would put upon us. Then we have Fellowship with him in his Offices. I need not branch them out severally, you know what he was anointed for, to be a *Priest* to offer Sacrifice, and to reconcile us to God, and to make Intercession for us: To be a *King*, to rule us by his Word and Spirit, and defend us against our Enemies: To be a *Prophet*, to reveal the Will of God to us, and instruct us in the same. Here is a large Field of Fellowship; we have Admittance by Faith in Jesus Christ, to the real Advantage and Benefit of all these; there is nothing in them but it relates to us, and redounds to us; the living Vertue of that Sacrifice, is as fresh and recent this Day, to send up a Savour of Rest to Heaven, and to pacify a troubled Conscience, as the first Day it was offered. That perfect Sacrifice is as available to thy Soul, as if thou had offered it thy self; and this Day ye have the Benefit of his Prayers in Heaven; we partake of the strong Cries and Tears in the Days of his Flesh, and of Intercession since, more than of our own Supplications. What shall I say? ye have one to teach you all Things that is needful for you; one to subdue your Sins under you; and by Vertue of Fellowship with Jesus Christ in these Offices, there is something derived from it, and communicated to us by it, that *we should be Kings and Priests to God our Father*; *Kings* to rule over own Spirits and Lusts, in as far as Grace reigns in us to eternal Life, and that is truly an heroick royal Spirit, that overcomes himself and the World; and *Priests, to offer unto God continually the Sacrifice of Prayer and Praises*, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 5. which are sweet smelling and pleasant in his Sight; yea, we should *offer up our own Bodies as a reasonable Service*, Rom. xii. 1. and this is a holy and living Sacrifice, when we dedicate and consecrate all our Faculties, Members, and Abilities to his Will and Service; and do not spare to kill our Lusts, which are his and our Enemies.

Let us sum up all in this, whatsoever Grace or Gift is in Christ Jesus, whatsoever Preheminence he hath above Angels and Men; whatsoever he purchased, he purchased by his obedient Life, and Patience in Death; there is nothing of all that, but the Soul may be admitted to Fellowship in it, by its Union with him by Faith; have him, and have all that he hath: Faith makes him yours, and all that he hath is a consequential Appendix to himself: The Word of the Gospel offers him freely to you, with all his Benefits, Interests and Advantages, O that our Hearts may be induced to open to him.

Now being thus united to Jesus Christ, that which I would persuade next to, is a personal Communion, that is, a suitable Entertainment of him, a Conjunction of your Soul to him by Love, and a Conspiracy of all your Endeavours henceforth to please him. It is certain, that true Friendship is founded on a Conjunction and Harmony of Souls by Affection, by which they cease to be two, and becomes in a Manner one; for Love makes a Kind of Transport of the Soul into another, and then all particular and proper Interests are drowned in Oblivion, no more *mine* and *thine*, but he makes an Interchange, *mine thine, and thine mine, my Heart thine, and thy Honour mine*. Now certain it is, that in this God hath given us a rare Pattern, and leads the Way; for he declares his

Love to the World, in the rareſt Effects of it, which give the cleareſt Demonſtrations poſſible; *God ſo loved the World, that he ſent his Son.* And you have the moſt infallible Argument of the Son's Love, *Greater Love hath no Man than this, to lay down his Life for his Friends*, but he for his Enemies. Now then, you ſee how the Heart of God and his Son Jeſus Chriſt is fixed from everlaſting on the Sons of Men ſo unalterably, and ſo fully ſet towards them, that it hath tranſported the *Son* out of his own Glory, and brought him down in the State of a Servant. But it is not yet known what particular Perſons are thus fixed upon, until that everlaſting Love break out from under Ground, in the Engagement of thy Soul's Love to him, and till he have faſtned this Chain, and ſet this Seal on thy Heart, which makes thee impatient to want him; Thou knoweſt not the Seal that was on his Heart from Eternity. But now the Love of a Believer being the Reſult of his Love, this is it that is the Source and Spring of conſtant Communion; and it vents it ſelf in Converſe with God, and daily Entertainment of him in our Spirits and Ways: There is a keeping of Company with him in Prayer and Meditation, and all the Ordinances; there is a Communication and familiar Conference of the Heart with him, either in thinking on him, or pouring out our Requeſts to him; there is a mutual and daily Intercourſe and Correſpondence of that Soul with God, in anſwering his Word by Obedience, in praying to him, and receiving Anſwers from him, and then returning his Anſwer again with a Letter of Thanks and Praiſe, as it were; theſe are the Ways to increaſe that Love of God, and kindle it up to a higher Flame; and it being thus increaſed, it gathers in all the Endeavours and Abilities of the Soul, and ſets all on Fire, as a ſweet ſmelling Sacrifice to pleaſe him: It is henceforth the great Study of the Soul, to remove all Things that are offenſive to him; for the entertaining of Sin, his Enemy, is moſt inconſiſtent with this true Fellowſhip and Friendſhip: *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear me*, Pſal. lxvi. 18. This will mar that ſweet Correſpondence in Prayer and Praiſes; for it is a Breach of Peace and Covenant, to regard and maintain his Enemies; therefore the Soul that loves God, will ſtudy to compoſe it ſelf in all Things to his good Pleaſure, as well as his Love that is ſtrong as Death, puts him upon a careful Watching, to do all Things for our Profit; and ſo this takes in our whole Carriage and Walking in religious Approaches, or in common Buſineſſes, to have this as our great Deſign, *converſing with God, and walking to all well-pleaſing.*

Now if we were once enrolled in this bleſſed Fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, then it follows, as a Fruit and Reſult of this, that we ſhould have Fellowſhip one with another; and truly the more Unity with God, the more Unity amongſt our ſelves; for he is the uniting, cementing Principle: He is the Center of all Chriſtians, and as Lines, the further they are from the Center, the farer diſtant they are one from another; ſo the Diſtance and Elongation of Souls from God, ſets them at furtheſt Diſtance amongſt themſelves: The nearer we come every one to Jeſus Chriſt, the nearer we join in Affection one to another: And this is imported in that of Chriſt's Prayer, *That they may be one in us*, Joh. xvii. 21, 22. No Unity but in that *one Lord*, and no perfect Unity, but in a perfect Union

Union with him. I would exhort to study this more, to have Fellowship one with another, as Members of the same Body, by Sympathy, by mutual Helping one another in spiritual and temporal Things: Even amongst Christians that live obscurely in a City, in a Village, there is not that harmonious Agreement and Consent of Hearts, that Contention and Plea of Love, of Gentleness and Forbearance, who shall exercise most of that: but there are many Jealousies, Heart-burnings, Grudgings, Strifes, evil Speakings, *&c.* to the stumbling of others, and the weakning of your selves; which certainly argue that ye are much carnal, and walk as Men, and that the Love of God, and Fellowship with him is waxed cold, and is languished and dead, *&c.*

SERMON VIII.

1 John i. 4. *And these Things write we unto you, that your Joy may be full.*

ALL Motions tend to Rest and Quietness, we see it daily in the Motions below, and we believe it also of the circular Revolutions of the Heavens above, that there is a Day coming in which they shall cease, as having performed all they were appointed for: And as it is in Things natural, so it is in Things rational in a more eminent Way; their Desires, Affections, and Actions, which are the Motions and Stretches of the Soul towards that it desires and apprehends as Good, tends of their own Nature, and are directed by the very Intention of the Soul, to some Rest and Tranquility, some Joy and Contentation of Spirit. If other Things that have no Knowledge, have their Center of Rest, how much more must Man, who is an understanding Creature, have it by the Ordination and Appointment of God? But there is this wide Difference in the Point of Capacity of Happiness between Man and other Creatures, that they, whatsoever excellent Vertues or Properties they have, yet know them not themselves, and so can neither enjoy what Excellency themselves have, nor have Use of what is in others; for, to what Purpose is it to shine forth, if there be no Eye to see? What Advantage hath the Rose in its Fragrancy, if it cannot smell it self? That which is not perceived, is as if it were not. And therefore it is an evident Testimony, that all these visible Things were created, not for themselves, but for Man's Sake who knows them, can use them, and enjoy them: Here is then the peculiar Capacity that God hath given to Man, to discern and know what he seeks, what he hath,

and poſſeſſes, that ſo he may be able to enjoy it, or uſe it, according to the Nature of it. This is a great Point of God's Image and Conformity with him, whoſe infinite Bleſſedneſs and Joy riſeth from that perfect Comprehenſion, and intuitive beholding of himſelf, and his own incomprehenſible Riches. So then, Man's Happineſs or Miſery muſt depend upon this, both what the Soul fixeth upon, and what it apprehendeth to be in it; for, if that eternal and univerſal Good, the Allfulneſs of God, be the Center of the Soul's Deſires and Endeavours, and there be apprehended and diſcovered in God, that infinite Excellency and Variety of Delights, which nothing elſe can afford ſo much as a Shadow of, then there cannot but reſult from ſuch a Conjunction of the Soul's Apprehenſion, ſuitable to the Fulneſs of God, and of the Excellency and Goodneſs of God, ſuitable to the Deſires of the Soul, ſuch a Reſt and Tranquility, ſuch Joy and Satisfaction, as cannot chooſe but make the Soul infinitely happier than the Enjoyment of any other Thing could do.

This being the Thing then, which all Mens Deſires naturally tend unto, this Tranquillity and perfect Satisfaction of the Heart being that which carries all Mens Hearts after it, and that which Men ſeek for it ſelf, and which they ſeek in all other Things: The great Miſery of Man is, that he miſtakes the Way to it, and ſeeks it where it is not to be found. The Generality of Men are ſo far degenerated both from the Impreſſion of a divine Majeſty, and the Senſe of an immortal Being within themſelves, that they imagine to content and eaſe their own Hearts, in theſe outward, unconſtant, periſhing Things; and ſo their Life is ſpent in catching at Shadows, in feeding on the Wind, in labouring in the Fire. There is nothing ſo plentifully ſatisfies our Expectations, as can quite the Coſt, and recompenſe the Expence of our Labour, Toil, Grief, and Travel about it; there is nothing therefore but a continual, reſtleſs Agitation of the Heart, from one Thing to another, and that in a round circling about, from one Thing that now diſpleaſes or diſappoints, to Things that were formerly loathed; as a ſick Man turns him from one Side to another, or changes Beds often, and at length returns, expecting to find ſome Eaſe where he lay at firſt. And it may be judged, that all circular Motions are eternal, and ſo they can never be ſuppoſed to attain their End, that is Reſt and Tranquility; therefore a Soul thus carried in a Round, by the vain Imaginations of his Heart, is likely never to ſettle and find ſolid Reſt and Peace. Nay, how is it poſſible that they can give that Tranquillity and Contentation to the Heart and Soul of Man, that are ſo utterly in their Natures diſproportioned to it? Both becauſe they are only ſuited to the Senſes, and likewiſe, for that they are changeable. Now the Soul is framed with a higher Capacity, and can no more be ſatiated with viſible Things, than a Man that is hungry can be ſatisfied with Gold; and beſides, it is immortal, and muſt have ſomething to ſurvive all the Changes of Time, and therefore is likely to reſt no where, but in that which hath eternal Stability. Now though theſe Things cannot truly fill the Heart, yet they ſwell the Belly, like the Eaſt-Wind, or like the Prodigal's Husks, fill it with Wind, which cauſeth many Torments and Diſtempers in the Soul; and though they cannot give Eaſe, yet *they may be as Thorns to prick and pierce a Man through with many Sorrows*, as our Saviour ſpeaks. So that there-

there is no more Wisdom or Gain in this, than in gathering an armful of Thorns, and inclosing and pressing hard unto them, the more hardly and strongly we grip them, the more grievously they pierce us; or as if a Man would flee into a Hedge of Thorns in a Tempest, the further he thrust into it, he is the worse pricked; and that which he is fallen into is worse than that he fleeth from. I am sure all your Experiences give a harmonious Testimony to this, that there is no solid, permanent, constant, and equable Heart-joy and Contentation in all the fancied and imaginary Felicities that this World adores. There is nothing of these Things, that is not lesser, and lower in actual Possession, nor in the first Apprehension of them afar off. Nothing in them answers either our Desires or Expectations; and therefore, in stead of Peace and Tranquillity, they breed more inward Torment and Disquiet, because of that necessary and inevitable Disappointment that attends them. Therefore the Apostle passeth all these Things in Silence, when he is to write of Purpose, to give a Fulness of Joy; for he knows that in them there is neither that Joy, nor that Fulness of Joy he would wish for from them; but it is other Things he writes for this End.

Now indeed there hath been some wiser than others, that have their Apprehension far above the rest of Mankind, and have laboured to frame some Rules and Precepts to lead Man into this true Rest and Tranquillity. And truly, in this they have done much to discover the Vanity and Madness of the common Practice of Men; and to draw Man from sensible and outward Things, to Things invisible and spiritual; yet there in a Defectiveness in all the Rules that natural Reason can reach unto; there is some Crookedness withal adheres to them, which shews our Departure from our Original. There are many excellent Discourses of Morality in Heathen Writings, which may be very subservient to a Christian, and useful to the composing and settling of his Mind, amidst all the Fluctuations and Uncertainties of this World; they may come well in as Subsidies and Guards to a Christians Heart, to preserve that Peace and Joy it hath from God, and keep out the ordinary tumultuous Passions that disturb the most Part of Men: But here is the lamentable Failing, that while they call a Man off Things without, as adventitious, they lead him but into his own Spirit within, as if he could there find that Rest in the very Enjoyment of his poor, miserable, wretched self. But Christ Jesus calls us into our own Spirits, not to dwell there; for O, what a lothsome and irksome Habitation is a defiled Heart, and a guilty Conscience? But rather that finding nothing of that Joy and Refreshment within, we may then freely and fully forsake our selves, as well as the World without; and transport into God in Christ, the only Habitation of Joy and Delight, that being filled with Anguish from the World, and from our selves, we may more willingly divorce from both, and agree to join unto Jesus Christ, and to imbrace him in our Hearts, who is the only Fountain of Life and Joy; who had no other Errand and Business from Heaven, but to repair Mans Joy, as grievous a Breach as any in the Creation: A Thing as much missed and sought after, as any Thing, yea, sought after in all Things that are sought: *Joh.* xv. 11. *These things I have spoken to you, that your Joy may be full.* Therefore the Apostle propounds this as the End of his writing

writing on this Subject, *the Word of Life*; *these Things I write that your Joy may be full*, and the Way to attain this Fulneſs of Joy, he expreſſed in the former *Verſe*, *by Fellowſhip with the Father and the Son*.

That which makes all other Things diſproportioned to the Soul of Man, to give it this Joy, is the extream Unſuitableneſs between them; that the Soul hath an infinite Capacity, and beſides an Immortality of Endurance, but they are condemned under Impotency to ſupply that infinite Void, and Inconſtancy, by which they muſt needs periſh, and leave the Soul without all Comfort, and with more Anxiety. But in theſe Things written here, we find all Things ſuited and proportioned to the very great Exigence of the Soul. There is a Suitableneſs in them, becauſe of their ſpiritual Nature, whereby they may cloſe immediately with thy Spirit; other Things are material, and corporeal, and what Union, what Fellowſhip can a Spirit be ſuppoſed to have with them? They are extrinſick, advenient Things, that never come to a nearer Union with thy Soul; and though they could, they would debaſe thy Soul, and not exalt it, becauſe of a baſer inferior Nature. But theſe Things, *Jeſus Chriſt*, *eternal Life in him*, *theſe precious Promiſes of the Goſpel*, *theſe ſpiritual Privileges of Sonſhip*, &c. theſe are of a more Divine Nature, and by Meditation and Faith Souls come to cloſe with them: Theſe are inward Things, more near the Soul that believes, than himſelf is to himſelf; and ſo he may always carry them about in his Heart, which may be a Spring of everlaſting Joy. *This no Man can take from him*, Joh. xvi. 22. For the Ground and Fountain is inward, ſeated without the Reach of all theſe Viciſſitudes and Changes. Then, as they have a Suitableneſs, ſo they have a Fulneſs in them, to create Fulneſs of Joy; they are Cordials to the Heart, Things that are in their own Nature refreſhing to the Soul, and apt to beget Heart-joy. Other Things are not ſuitable to this, to produce any ſuch inward Soul-complacency; the Things that are from without, reach not ſo deep as the Heart, they make their Impreſſions rather on the outward Senſes, to tickle and pleaſe them, or the Countenance, to put ſome pleaſing Shape upon it. But the wiſe Man pronounceth all theſe Joys that ariſe from external Things, to be ſuperficial, only skin-deep; *in the midſt of Laughter the Heart is ſorrowful, and the End of that Mirth is Heavineſs*, Prov. xiv. 13. *Extrema gaudii luctus occupat.* There is no ſolid Recreation to the Soul, in its retired Thoughts from all the Delights of the Senſes: It is but like the Pleaſure of the Itch, which no Man eſteems Pleaſure. But beſides, as the Things of the Goſpel affect the Heart and Soul, by bringing Soul-mercies, and Treaſures, as Forgiveneſs of Sin, Hope of Heaven, *&c.* ſo there is a Fulneſs in them, which may anſwerably fill all the Corners of the Heart with Joy; there is an Uexhauſtedneſs in theſe Things, an Univerſality in Chriſt, *all in all*, *all the Treaſures of Wiſdom are in him*: And may not this cauſe ſurely an high Spring-tide of Joy. The Heart is eaſed upon the loweſt clear Apprehenſion of Chriſt and the Goſpel, it gives a Heart-ſereniiy and Calmneſs to a troubled Soul, that nothing elſe could do; yet to make up the Fulneſs of Joy, as well as the Solidity of it; to extend the Meaſure of it, as well as to beget the true Quality of it; it is requiſite that not only there be a Fulneſs in the Object, that is *full*, *ſuperabundant*

bundant, ample Matter of rejoycing; but there must be a kind of Fulness in the Apprehension, it must be represented fully as it is, and the Clouds of Unbelief scattered; and then indeed, upon the full Aspect of the Gospel, and Christ in it, there is a Fulness of Joy that flows into the Soul, as the Sea is filled upon the full Aspect of the Moon. Oh, that we could believe this, that there is a Fulness of Joy here, and no where else; certainly this alone being pondered and sunk into our Hearts, would be a powerful Reformer in us, and among us; how would it carry Mens Hearts to a disgracing and despising all the Things that are held in Admiration by Men? How would it turn the Channel of Mens Judgments, Opinions, Affections, and Conversations? For certainly whithersoever the Tide of Joy flows, thither the Heart is carried, and it is that all Men are seeking, though they take many contrary and diverse Ways, as their own Fancy leads them. Now if once this were established in thy Soul, that here is that Truth and Fulness of Joy, which elsewhere is ignorantly and vainly sought; would it not divert thy Desires, and turn the Current of thy Affections and Endeavours, to fall into this Ocean of Gladness and Delight? Elsewhere there is neither true Joy, nor full Joy, *nec verum nec plenum gaudium*; there is no Verity in it, it is but an external Garb and Shadow, and there is no Plenty or Fulness in it; it fills not the Hand of the Reaper, it satisfieth not his very Hunger. But here, when a Soul is possessed with Christ by Faith, and dwelleth in God by Love, there is both Reality and Plenty: All the Dimensions of the Heart may be filled up. Some allegorize upon the triangular Composition of Mans Heart, that no orbicular Thing, such as this World, can fill it exactly without Vacuity, but only the blessed and holy Trinity. Truly we may conceive, this Fulness of Joy, excluding all the latent Griefs of the Heart, and filling up all the vacant Corners, doth flow from that blessed Fellowship of the *Father and the Son*. Now though these two be only mentioned, yet the *Holy Ghost* must not be excluded, for the Apostolick Prayer doth attribute chiefly our Fellowship with God to the *Spirit*; so that it is the *Spirit* unites our Hearts, and associates them to God, that seems to correspond between him and us: So then there is such a Fellowship with the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, that leaves no Vacuity in the Heart, that fills all the Dimensions and Corners of it with Peace and Joy.

But add unto this, in the *third* Place, that these Things have not only a Fulness, but withal a Durableness; not only Plenty, but besides, Eternity and Perpetuity, to correspond to the Immortality of the Soul; And this certainly is a great Congruity, and so makes up much Beauty and Harmony; for what more incongruous and unsuitable, than for an immortal Spirit to spend it self, and give up it self to that which is not, which must leave it, which is mortal, and fading in its own Nature, without which, it must continue infinitely longer than it can enjoy it? And what more comely, than for an immortal Thing to associate to eternal Things, and to derive its Joy from an eternal Spring? For then, when all Things visible are done away, and Things mortal abolished, then *its Joy none can take from it*; because it takes its Joy from that, which must survive all these Changes. Suppose any Thing could for the present give a Fulness of Joy, and absolute Content to the Heart, yet if we imagine that Thing may

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be ſeparated and disjoyned from the Heart, and ceaſe to be, certainly the very Expectation of ſuch an eternal Separation, would almoſt extinguiſh all the Joy, and make it dry up of the Fulneſs: For, may a Soul think, What ſhall I do for ever when this Well dries? Whence ſhall I draw Water of Joy? Out of what Well? But now, that Fear is removed, and the Soul needs not loſe the Sweetneſs of the preſent Enjoyment of God, through anxious Foreſight of the future, becauſe he may know, that the perfect Fulneſs that ſhall never ebb, is but coming, and the Sun is but aſcending yet towards the *Meridian*, from whence he ſhall never go down, but ſtand fixed, to be the eternal Wonder and Delight of Angels and Men.

Now though it be true, that Chriſtians here, have neither that Plenty, nor that Perpetuity of this Joy, that the Object of it gives Ground for; though their Hearts be often filled with Griefs and Sorrows, partly from outward, partly from inward Evils and Afflictions; yet certainly this ariſeth but from the dark Apprehenſion, dim Belief, and ſlight Conſideration of theſe Things that Chriſt ſpoke, and his Apoſtles wrote unto us; we might, no Queſtion, keep our Hearts in more Peace and Tranquillity, in all the Commotions of the Times, or Alterations in our ſelves, if we did more ſtedfaſtly believe the Goſpel, and keep more conſtant Fellowſhip with God. But however it be, there is radically a Fulneſs of Joy in every Believers Heart, that Seed is ſown, that ſhall one Day be ripe of Fulneſs of Joy, it is always lying at the Root, and reſerved for them. O, let us lay theſe Things to Heart, which being laid to Heart, and laid up in the Heart, will fill it with this ſweet fragrant Perfume of Peace and Joy: They are written for this End, let us hear them for this End too, that our Joy may be full. It is true indeed, that this Fulneſs of Joy ſuits only the Life to come, when the Veſſel is both inlarged and ſtrengthned to contain it: Things that have ſtrong Spirits in them, muſt have ſtrong new Bottles, ſuch as our crazy mortal Bodies are not; therefore the Lord hath reſerved the juſt Fulneſs, the Overflowings of this Joy, for the Time that the Soul ſhall be purified from all Sin, and the Body delivered from all Corruption: Becauſe that Sin lurks in many Corners of the Heart now, therefore this Joy cannot fill up the Heart, and all the Vacuities of it; for it is of ſo pure and heavenly a Nature, that it will not compound and intermingle with Sin, or ſinful Luſts; but when nothing of that remains in the Heart, then it flows in apace, and leaves no Corner of the Heart unſatisfied and unſupplied. I would have you, who get ſome Taſtes of this Joy and Peace by the Way, not diſquieted and troubled, becauſe it abides not to be ordinary Food; if you be ſet down again to your ordinary ſpare Diet of Manna in the Wilderneſs, and have not theſe firſt Fruits and Grapes of *Canaan* often ſent to you; think it not ſtrange, for the Fulneſs which you ſeek, you are not capable of here, but you ſhall be capable of it hereafter. You ought with Patience to wait for that Day, *when your Joy ſhall be full*, as Chriſt is full; *full Meaſure, heaped up, and running over*, will he met out unto you then: And this ſhall be without the Fear of any Ebb or Diminution of it for all Eternity; neither ſhall this Fulneſs, and conſtant Fulneſs, cloy the Soul, or breed any Satiety in it: There is Fulneſs of Joy without Surfeit, without Satiety, that which

which they have, they shall always desire, and that which they desire, they shall always have: Everlasting Desire, and everlasting Delight, being married together in their Fulness. But yet so much is attainable here, as may truly be called Fulness, in Regard of the World; the Fulness of Joy that all the Pleasures of this Earth can afford, is but Scarcity and Want, to the inward Fulness of Joy and Contentaion, the poorest Believers may have in God, reconciled in Christ. That which the wise Man gives as the Character of all earthly Joy, suits well. *I said of Laughter, it is mad, and of Mirth, what doth it?* Eccl. ii. 2. Truly it cannot be supposed to be more real, than that which is the Ground and Spring of it. It must be a perfunctorious, superficial, and empty Joy, that is derived and distilled from such Vanities. Nay, there is a Madness in it besides, for Mens Apprehensions to swell so excessively, towards poor, narrow, and limited Things; it is a Monster in Reason, to put such Value upon nothing, and make our selves glad upon our own Dreams and Fancies; there is such a manifest Abuse and Violation of Reason in it, that it can be supposed to proceed from nothing but a Distemper in Mens Hearts. But besides this, there are two other Characters of it given, *Prov.* xiv. 13. *Even in Laughter the Heart is sorrowful, and the End of that Mirth is Heaviness.* There is no pure earthly Joy; for it hath always a Mixture of Grief and Sadness in the inward retired Closet of the Heart; it is of such Deadness and Inefficacy, that it drives not out of the Heart all Discontentments and Anxieties; but if the most jovial Man, that seems to be transported with his Delights, would but retire within, and examine his own Conscience, he would find those Delights have but little Power to affect his Heart; he would find terrible and dreadful Representations there, that his Joys may well for a Time darken them, but cannot drive them away: And then it is the very natural Law, and fatal Necessity, that Grief follows these Joys at the Heels, yea, is perpetually attending them, to come in their Place; God hath so conjoyned them together, and so disposed them, that Mens Joy shall be mingled with Grief, but their Grief is pure and unmixed; and that he who draws up Joy to him from the Creatures, must draw Grief and Vexation in that same Chain, inseparably annexed to it by the wise Ordination of God.

But there are Joys of the *Holy Ghost* arising from the Intimation and Apprehension of the Gospel, from the Consideration of the Grace and Goodness of God manifested in it, and the Experience of that in the Soul, which are of another Stamp and Nature. These indeed affect the Heart, and give the Answer of a good Conscience, in the Blood of Christ, which is a continual Feast; these drive out the bitter and dreadful Apprehensions of Sin and Wrath; these sweeten and refresh the Soul in all worldly Afflictions and Griefs: *The Heart of Man knoweth his own Bitterness, and a Stranger doth not intermiddle with his Joy*, Prov. xiii. 10. Indeed, the Torments and Perplexities of a troubled Soul, are better felt by themselves, than known by others, and so are the Joys of that Heart that apprehends Jesus Christ, and Peace purchased in him; they are such, as no Man that is a Stranger to such Things in his Experience can apprehend. *It is a Joy unspeakable*; O what unspeakable Content gives it to the Heart. And truly if you did not interpose the

Clouds of Unbelief and Sin between you and his ſhining Countenance, there needed not be ſo often an Eclipſe in the Joys of Believers; yet the Day is coming that ye ſhall ſee him fully as he is, and nothing be interpoſed between you and him, and then your Joy ſhall be full, &c.

SERMON IX.

1 John i. 5. *This then is the Meſſage which we heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is Light*, &c.

THE great Deſign of the Goſpel is to make up the Breach of Mans Joy, and open up the Way to the Fulneſs of it: And therefore it is the *good News and glad Tidings of great Joy*, the only beſt Meſſage that ever came to the World. Now it ſhews unto us the Channel, that this River of Gladneſs and Joy runs into; it diſcovers what is the Way of the Conveyance of it to the Soul, and what are the Banks it runs between, and that is, *Fellowſhip with the Father and the Son*. In this Channel that River of Delight runs, between the Banks of the Love of God to us, and our Love to him. Herein a Soul is happy, and accounts it ſelf happy; and truly, in ſo much do we profit by the Word, and anſwer the Deſign of the Goſpel, by how much we eſtimate our Happineſs from this alone, from the Communication of God to us. Whenſoever the Goſpel takes hold of your Hearts, it will undoubtedly frame them to this, to a meaſuring of all Bleſſedneſs from God alone: And this will carry the Heart to an Undervaluing of all other Things, as being too low, and unworthy for this End; and ſo to a forſaking of any Thing for the cloſſer Enjoyment of God. I fear many Believers are little acquainted with this Joy, becauſe they draw not their Joy ſingly out of the pure Fountain of Delight; but turn aſide to other external Comforts, and drown their Souls in them. Now indeed, theſe two cannot well conſiſt together; if we take in any thing elſe to make up our Happineſs and Comfort, ſo much we loſe of God, and that which is truly ſpiritual; and therefore our Hearts would be more purified from carnal Delights, if we would have Experience of this Joy: We muſt hang only upon his Countenance and Company, elſe we loſe the Sweetneſs of it.

Now the Apoſtle proſecutes this further, to diſcover what Conformity muſt be between them that ſhould keep this Fellowſhip; and what Likeneſs of Nature and Qualities is neceſſary for them who would be happy in God's Society. *This is the Meſſage we have heard* (ſaith he) *and which we declare unto you, that God is Light*, &c. Take this jointly

jointly, with that which went before; *This we declare, that ye may have Fellowship with the Father, and the Son.* And to the End this Fellowship may hold, and yield you Fulness of Joy, it is necessary that the Nature of God be laid down, as the Pattern to which ye must be conform. *God is Light*, and therefore you must be *Light* too, if ye would have Fellowship with that *pure Light*. Now this, I say, is the full Message of the Gospel, that which was sent down from Heaven, with the *Son of God*, *the Messenger of the Covenant*, and which the Apostles heard from him. Indeed the very manner of the Proposal of these Things stir up our Hearts to Attention, and make us more serious than commonly we are, That there is one, and such an one sent from Heaven, with such an Embassage as this is, to invite us to Society with God again; one whose Interest lyes in this, to make us happy; and this he declares unto us, that he hath no other Design, but to fulfil our Joy. O how powerful might this be on our Hearts, to conquer them, to make them willingly hearken to him? Any Message that comes from Heaven, should be received with great Reverence and Respect of mortal Men; because it comes from the Court and Palace of the great King. But when this is the Substance of it, to make us happy in himself, to advance us to this incomparable Dignity of Society with himself, in which Society there is a Fulness of Joy; then how should we receive it with open Hearts, and intertain it gladly? If we could take it always thus, as a Message from Heaven, and look upon it, and hear it in that Notion, I think the Fruit would be incomparably greater; for what is it that makes it dead and ineffectual in Mens Hearts, but that the Apprehension of it degenerates and falls down from God to Creatures, because it is not taken so as his Word, carrying the Stamp of his Divine Authority: We bring it forth, not as a Message from him, but as from our selves; and you receive it, not as from him, but from us; and thus it is adulterated and corrupted on both Hands: My Beloved, let us jointly mind this, that whatsoever we have to declare, it is a Message from God to mortal Men; and therefore let us so compose our selves in his Sight, as if he were speaking to us. The Conscience of a very Heathen was awaked, when *Ehud* told him he had a Message from God to him: *Eglon arose out of his Seat*, that he might hear it reverently, *Judg.* iii. 20. though it was a bloody Message, as it proved in the Event; yet so much the common Dictates of Reason might teach you, that ye should arise, and compose your selves to reverent and awful Attention to what the Lord God will speak. But when moreover we know that the Sum of the Message is, to make us blessed, and raise us up to Communion with him in his Joy and Happiness; we are not only called to Reverence, as to God, but to ardent Affection and Desire, as to him who by all Means seeks our Happiness. O how happy were he that could first hear, and receive this Message from him, and then declare it to others. But however, though we should fail in that, this doth not change either the Authority, or Nature of the Message it self; and therefore, if Men should be so far destitute of God, as not to bring it from him immediately, yet do not you forsake your own Mercy too; but receive it as that which is come forth from God; receive it for itself, as carrying in its Bosom a Fulness of Joy to you; and re-

ceive it for his Sake who moved this Embaſſage firſt after Sinners, and his Sake who carried it to Sinners, that is, for the *Father, and the Son*; to whoſe Fellowſhip you are here invited. Let us then hear the Meſſage.

This then is the Meſſage, that God is Light, &c. The Ground of Communion of Perſons, is their Union in Nature, or Likeneſs one to another. There is ſome general Society between all Mankind, as being conjoined in one common Nature; but the contracting of that in a narrower Bounds of Affinity and Conſanguinity, doth inlarge the Affection the more: You ſee it is natural for thoſe who are joined by ſuch Relations of Blood one to another, to love one another more than others out of theſe Bonds. But true Friendſhip draws the Circle yet narower, and contracts the Love that is ſcattered abroad to Mankind in a ſtrange Channel, to run towards one, or a few; and the Foundation of this is ſome peculiar and particular Similitude, and Likeneſs in Manners, and Sympathy of Diſpoſition, which makes the Souls of Men to melt one into another, after ſome Converſe and Acquaintance together; this is the Bond that knits this near Society; ſome Conformity neceſſarily preſuppoſed to Communion and Fellowſhip. Now that which holds ſo in the Communion of Man with Man, muſt be much more needful in Mans Communion with God: For all the Societies, Combinations, and Conjunctions of the Creatures, are but Shadows of this higher Communication of the Spirit of Man, with God *the Father of Spirits*. And indeed we may find ſome rude Draughts and Reſemblances of this divine Society, and of the Rule according to which it muſt be modell'd, in all the friendly or near Conjunctions of Creatures; for every Thing is beſt preſerved, and agreeth beſt with Things of its own Nature: See the Diſpoſition of the Parts of the World; Things contiguous, and neareſt other, are alſo likeſt in Nature one to another; ſo it is among Men, the ſeveral Agreements, and Symbolizings of Mens Spirits in different Qualities and Tempers, makes ſeveral Sorts of Men, and parts them into ſo many Companies: *Pares paribus congregantur, ſimile ſimili gaudet.*

Now, my Beloved, this ſame ſupernatural and divine Society that we ſpeak of, muſt be conſtituted according to this fundamental Rule, that is, It is neceſſary, to the End that God and Man may have Fellowſhip together, that they come nearer in Likeneſs one to another: Now for God, you know he cannot be liker us, for he is unchangeably Holy and Good: That were moſt abſurd, to bring down his Majeſty to partake of our wretched Infirmities of Sin and Darkneſs: Indeed in this he hath come as far as his own Nature and our Good would permit, to communicate in our Nature, and all the ſinleſs Infirmities of it: It is impoſſible then that he ſhould make up the Diſtance by any Change of himſelf, but we muſt be changed, and ſome Way raiſed up to partake of the Purity of his Nature, and be transformed into ſome Likeneſs to him, and then is the Foundation of Society and Fellowſhip laid down: This is the Apoſtle's Meaning, in declaring to us what God is, that according to that Pattern, and in that Glaſs, we may ſee what to conform our ſelves to, and may have a particular Determination of the great Qualification of theſe who pretend to Fellowſhip with God: *God is Light, and in him is no Darkneſs.* Now take the juſt Oppoſition, Man is Darkneſs,

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and in him is no Light. Now what Communion then can Light have with Darkness? Either the Light must become Darkness, or the Darkness become Light; either the Light must leave its glorious Purity, and forsake its Nature, which cannot be admitted, or else the Darkness of Mens Souls must be wiped off, and abolished by the Brightness of God's Light; and then there may be a Communion between the primitive Light, and the derivative Light, between the original Light, and that which flows out from the Original. But take Darkness, remaining Darkness, and Light, remaining Light, and they cannot compone together; for the first great Separation that was made in the World, was between Light and Darkness: *And God saw that Light was good, and God divided between the Light and the Darkness*, Gen. i. 4. And so it is impossible for Men that live in the Darkness of their Minds, in Ignorance, and in the Darkness of sinful Lusts, that they can have any Fellowship with God, who is a Fountain of pure Light, and undefiled Sanctity. *What hast thou to do to take my Covenant in thy Mouth*, &c. and this God saith to the Wicked. It is an incongruous and unsuitable Thing, for Men to pretend Nearness and Interest in this God, and yet be buried in Darkness and Hatred of the Light of personal Reformation, as a Gold Ring in a Swine's Nose, that rather deforms the Jewel, than beautifies the Beast: So are the Pretensions of ignorant and wicked Men, to this divine Society, &c.

SERMON X.

1 Joh. i. 5. *This then is the Message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is Light*, &c.

WHO is a fit Messenger to declare this Message? Can Darkness comprehend the Light, or apprehend it? Or can those that are blind, form any lively Notion of Light, to the Instruction and Persuasion of others? Truly, no more can we conceive or speak of God, who is that pure Light, than a blind Man can discourse on Colours, or a deaf Man on Sounds; *Who is Blind as the Lord's Servant?* And therefore, who are more unmeet to declare this Message of Light? What Reverence and godly Fear ought this to be declared withal, when mortal Man speaks of the eternal God unto mortal Men? What Composure of Spirit should be in us? What Trembling and Adoration? For at our best, we can but declare our own Ignorance, and the furthest Attainment in this Knowledge, is but a further Discovery of Man's Darkness. We have three Ways of creeping towards that glorious Light of God, *first*, his own Works are like some visible Appearances

pearances of that invisible and incomprehensible God; and in these we know him, but not what he is in himself. Consider how dark and dull we are in piercing into the hidden Natures of Things, even below us, as Beasts and Plants: We behold some Effects flow from them, but from what Principle these do flow, that we know not: How much less can we apprehend any Thing suitable of the divine Majesty, that is infinitely above us, from these wonderful and glorious Works of his Power and Wisdom? Man is indowed with Wisdom, to do some excellent Works of Art, as Planting, Graffing, Building, Painting, Weaving, and such like. But the Beasts that are below us, cannot apprehend from these Works, what the Nature of Man is. Now is there not a more infinite Distance, a greater Disproportion between us and the divine Nature, so that we cannot rise up to an understanding Notion of it, in it self? Nay, besides, one Man will do many Things which another cannot understand, he beholds the Art of it, he sees the Matter, but yet he cannot pierce into the Mind of the Work-man, and look upon that Wisdom and *Idea* of his Mind. Therefore all that we can conclude from these wonderful Works of God, is some silent Admiration of him. If these be such, then what must he be? How infinitely distant from them, and transcendent over them? But what he is, these cannot declare, and we cannot apprehend. Then we use to climb up to the Knowledge of God, by attributing to him all the Perfections, Excellencies, and Eminencies of the Creatures: Whatsoever commends them, we apprehend that originally and infinitely in him; and thus we spell out that Name that is most simply one, in many Letters, and Characters, according to our mean Capacity, as Children when they begin to learn; so we ascribe to him Wisdom, Goodness, Power, Justice, Holiness, Mercy, Truth, &c. All which Names being taken from the Creatures, and so having Significations suited to our Imperfections, they must needs come infinitely short of him, and so our Apprehensions of them: These are scattered among the Creatures, therefore they cause diverse Conceptions in us; but all these are united in him. He is a most simple, pure Being, that eminently and virtually is all Things; and properly is none of all.

Another Way we have of apprehending him, by Way of Negation, denying all the Imperfections of the Creatures, and removing them at an infinite Distance from him; and truly, though this be an Imperfection in Knowledge, yet it is the greatest Knowledge we can attain to, to know rather what he is not, than what he is: He is not limited to any Place, nor bounded with any Measures and Degrees of Perfection, as Creatures are; therefore we call him *Infinite*: He is not comprehended within the Limits of Time, but comprehends all within himself; therefore he is *Eternal*: He is not subject to Changes and Alterations, therefore called *immutable*. He is not compounded, as a Result of diverse Parts, therefore he is most purely *Simple*, and *One*: He is not like these Things we see and hear, that fall under our Senses; therefore we call him a *Spirit*, or a spiritual Being. Now in all these weak Endeavours of Man, to detain and fix his own Spirit in the Contemplation of God, if he cannot reach the Understanding of what God is, yet certainly he will attain this great Point of Wisdom, not to be ignorant of his own Ignorance. And truly, my Beloved, this is the Thing I would have us to learn to know, that the Admiration of God in Silence, is

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the best Expression of him. We would not search into these Mysteries, to satisfy our Curiosity, but rather compose our Hearts to a continual silent Wondering before him; for where our Understandings are confounded, and our Minds overwhelmed with the Infiniteness of that Glory; so that we can see nothing but our own Ignorance of all: This should certainly compose all to quiet Admiration, for Silence and Wonder is the proper and natural Posture of a Soul that is at a Stand, and can neither win forward for inaccessible Light, nor will retire backward, for that it apprehends already.

This then is the Message, that God is Light, because we cannot conceive in our poor narrow Minds, what God is in himself, therefore he expresseth to us often in Similitudes to the Creatures, and condescends to our Capacity. As he stands in manifold Relations to us, so he takes the most familiar Names, that may hold out to our dull Senses what we may expect of him: Therefore he calls himself *a Father, a King, a Husband, a Rock, a Buckler,* and *strong Tower, a Mountain,* and whatsoever else may represent to our Hearts, that which may strengthen them in believing. But there is no Creature so directly attributed to God, as *Light:* None used to express his very Nature and Being, as abstracted from these Relations, but this, *God is Light,* and Christ takes it to himself, *the Light of the World,* and *the Life of Men.* The Truth is, it hath some Excellency in it above all other visible Creatures, that it may fitly carry some Resemblance to him. The Scripture calls *Light his Garment,* Psal. civ. 2. And truly it is a more glorious Rob of Majesty, than all the Royal and Imperial Robs and Garments of State, that either Angels or Men could contrive. *The Light* is, as it were, a visible Appearance of the invisible God: He hath covered his invisible Nature with this glorious Garment, to make himself in a Manner visible to Man. 'Tis true, that *Light* is, but as it were, a Shadow of that inaccessible Light, *umbra Dei.* It is the dark Shadow of God, who is himself infinitely more beautiful and glorious: But yet, as to us, it hath greater Glory and Majesty in it, than any Creature besides. It is the chief of the Works of God, without which the World would be without Form, and Void: It is the very Beauty of the Creation, that which gives Lustre and Amiableness to all that is in it, without which the pleasantest Paradise would become a Wilderness, and this beautiful Structure, and adorned Palace of the the World, a loathsome Dungeon. Besides the admirable Beauty of it, it hath a wonderful swift Conveyance, throughout the whole World, the upper and lower, in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, it is carried from the one End of Heaven to the other in a Moment, *and who can say by what Way the Light is parted?* Job xxxviii. 24. Moreover it carries alongst with it a beautiful Influence, and refreshing Heat and Warmness, which is the very Life and Subsistance of all the Creatures below. And so, as there is nothing so beautiful, so nothing so universally and highly profitable; and to all this, add that singular Property of it, that it is not capable of Infection, it is of such absolute Purity, that it can communicate it self to the Dung-hill, as well as to the Garden, without receiving any Mixture from it: In all the Impurities it meets withal, it remains unmixed, and untainted, and preserves its own Nature intire. Now you may perceive that there is nothing visible that is fitter to resemble the invisible God, than

than this glorious, beautiful, pure, and universally communicable Creature, *Light*.

Hereby you may have shadowed out unto you the Nature of God, that he is an all-knowing, intelligent Being, as Light is the first and principal visible Thing; yea, that which gives Visibility to all Things: And so is in its own Nature a Manifestation of all Things material and bodily; so God is the first Object of the Understanding; *Primum intelligible, & primum intelligens*. Nothing so fit an Emblem of Knowledge, as Light, and truly in that respect God is the original Light, a pure intellectual Light, that hath in himself the perfect *Idea* and Comprehension of all Things; he hath anticipated in himself the Knowledge of all, because all Things were formed in his infinite Understanding, and lay, as it were, first hid in the Bowels of his infinite Power. Therefore he is a Glob or Mass of Light and Knowledge, like the Sun, from whom nothing is hid: *Hell and Destruction are not covered to him*, there is no Opacity, no Darkness or Thickness in the Creation, that can terminate or bound this Light, or hinder his Understanding to pierce into it. Now as all Things by the Irradiation of the Light become visible, so the Participation of this glorious *Sun of Righteousness*, and the shining of his Beams into the Souls of Men, makes them to partake of that heavenly intellectual Nature, and reflects a wonderful Beauty upon them, which is not in the rest of the World.

Besides, here is represented to us the absolute Purity and Perfection of God's Nature, *God is Light, and in him is no Darkness:* Besides the Purity of the Light of Knowledge, there is a Purity of the Beauty of Holiness, the glorious Light of God his Vertue, and Power, and Wisdom, is communicated to all the Creatures; there is an universal Extent of his Influence towards the good and bad, as the Sun shines on both, and yet there is no Spot or Stain upon his Holiness or Righteousness, from all his intermingling with the Creatures, the worst and basest Creatures. All his Works are holy and righteous, even his Works in unholy and unrighteous Men; he draws no Defilement from the basest of the Creatures, nor yet from the Sinfulness of it: He can be intimately present and conjoined in working, in Vertue and Power, in Care and Providence, with the Dirt and Mire of the Streets, with the Beasts of the Field, and yet that is no Stain upon his Honour or Credit, as Men would suppose it to be; no more than it is a Dishonour to the Sun to shine on the Dung-hill; in a Word, there is no Mixture of Ignorance, Darkness, Impurity, or Iniquity in him, not the least Shadow of Change or Turning, not the least Seed of Imperfection; in regard of him the Moon is not clean, and the Sun is spotted; in respect of his Holiness, Angels may be charged with Folly.

Then add unto this, to make up the Resemblance fuller, the Bounty and Benignity of his Influence upon the World, the Flowings forth of his infinite Goodness, that inricheth the whole Earth. Look as the Sun is the greatest and most universal Benefactor, his Influence and Heat is the very Renovation of the World, it makes all new, and green and flourishing; it puts a Youth upon the World, and so is the very Spring and Fountain of Life to all sublunary Things. How much is that true of the *true Light*, of the Substantial, of whom this Sun is but a Shadow. He is *the Life of the World, and the Light of Men. Every good Gift,*

Gift, and every perfect Donation descends from him, Jam. i. 17. his Influence is more universal to the being, to the moving, to the living of all Things. And then *Jesus Christ the Sun of Righteousness* is carried about in the Orb of the Gospel, and in his Beams there is a healing Vertue; these are the Refreshments of poor wearied Souls, that are scorched with the Anger of God. There is an admirable Heat and Warmness of Love and Affection, that this *glorious Light* carries imbosomed in it, and that is it that pierces into Souls, and warms Hearts, and quickens dead Spirits, and puts a new Face upon all again. This is the Spring of all the Life that is truly Spiritual, and it hath as sweet and comfortable Effects upon the Souls of Men, who receive the Truth in Love, the Light in Love, that is, the Light with Heat, as ever the Sun approaching near the Earth hath had upon Plants and living Creatures.

And to complete the Resemblance more, there may be something of the Infallibility and Incomprehensibility of the Divine Majesty here represented; for tho' nothing be clearer than the Light, yet there is nothing in its own Nature darker than Light: That which is so manifest to the Eyes, how obscure is it to the Understanding? Many Debates and Inquiries have been about it, but yet it is not known what that is, by which we know all Things. Certainly, such is the *Divine Light*: It is inconceivable and inexpressible, therefore he is said *to dwell in Light inaccessible, and full of Glory*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. There is a twofold Darkness that hinders us to see God, a Darkness of Ignorance in us, and a Darkness of inaccessible Light in him: The one is a Vail upon our Hearts, which blinds and darkens the Souls of Men, that they do not see that which is manifest of God, even in his Works. O that Cloud of Unbelief that is spread over our Souls, which hinders the glorious Rays of that *Divine Light* to shine into them. This Darkness Satan contributes much to, who is *the Prince of Darkness*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. This makes the most Part of Souls like Dungeons within, when the glorious Light of the Gospel surrounds them without: This Earthliness and Carnality of our Hearts, makes them like the Earth, receive only the Light in the upper and outward Superfice, and not suffer it to be transmitted into our Hearts, to change them. But when it pleaseth him, who at the first, by a Word of Power, *commanded Light to shine out of Darkness*, he can scatter that Cloud of Ignorance, and draw away the Vail of Unbelief, and can by his Power and Art, so transform the Soul, as to remove its earthly Quality, and make it transparent and pure, and then the Light will shine into the Heart, and get free Access into the Soul. But though this Darkness were wholly removed, there is another Darkness, that ariseth not from the Want of Light, but from the excessive Super-abundance of Light; *Caligo lucis nimiæ*, that is, a divine Darkness, a Darkness of Glory, such an infinite Excess and *Superplus* of Light and Glory, above all created Capacities, that it dazles and confounds all mortal or created Understandings. We see some Shadows of this, if we look up to the clear Sun; we are able to see nothing for too much Light, there is such an infinite Disproportion here between the Eye of our Mind, and this divine Light of Glory, that if we curiously pry into it, it is rather confounding and astonishing; and therefore it fills the Souls of Saints with continual silent Admiration and Adoration.

SERMON XI.

1 John i. 5. *This then is the Message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is Light, and in him is no Darkness at all.*

TRUE Religion consists not only in the Knowledge of God, but especially in Conformity to him, and Communion with him. Communion and Fellowship with God is the great End and Design of the Gospel, and it is the great Result of all a Christian's Pains and Progress; it is not only the greatest Part of Religion, but the very Reward of Religion too; for Piety hath its Reward of Happiness in the Bosom of it, without borrowing from external Things. Now that which this sweet and fragrant Fruit, which perfumes all the Soul with Delight, and fills it with Joy, springs out of, is, *Conformity to God*, Assimilation of Nature and Disposition, some Likeness to God imprinted on the Soul again in holy Affections and Dispositions, a Co-incidency of our Will with the Will of God, Drowning of it in the Sea of his good Pleasure, his Law in the inward Parts. Now what is the Root of this Conformity, but the Knowledge of God? This is that which hath a Vertue to transform the Soul into his Similitude: You see then where true Religion begins lowest, and by what Means it grows up to the sweet Fruit of that eternal Joy that shall be prest out of the Grapes of Fellowship with God: So then whatsoever is declared of God unto us in his Word, whatsoever is holden forth of him, it is not only set forth to be the Subject of our Knowledge, but especially to be a Pattern for Imitation, and to be an inflaming Motive to our Affection; This is the very Substance of the *Verse*.

This then is the Message, I declare that God is Light, and this I heard not from Christ only for the Satisfaction of my Curiosity, nor do I declare it to you only that you may know it, as if you had no more to do with it, but especially that ye may know what ye ought to be in Conformity to that Light; the End of your knowing God, is to become liker God, if so be ye would have Communion with him.

Let us take this Rule then, to measure all our Searchings after God, and Inquirings into him; certainly there ought to be more Meditation and Inquiry of Heart upon this Subject, because it is the Spring of all Life to the Soul; it is that which enricheth it most, and fills it with Peace, Joy, and Delight, and brings in a Treasure into a Man's Heart, such as Christ speaks of; *A good Man out of the*

the good Treasure of his Heart, &c. Meditation, much Meditation on God, a Stayedness and Fixedness of Spirit upon him, lays up a Treasure in the Heart; this is it that makes such a Difference between the Heart and Mouth of a righteous Man, and a wicked Man; the Heart of the Wicked is little worth, for the total Want of this; and therefore their Lips and Tongues are void of Edification, full of Corruption. But where this Spring floweth within, it maketh the Mouth of a Man like a Well of Life; it maketh his Lips like choise Silver. O, the Scantiness and Neglect of this amongst Christians, makes all to wither and decay: there is little Searching after the Almighty, little imploying and intertaining our Spirits about him; low, slender, and single Thoughts and Apprehensions of him, which cannot but cause a *deliquium* and Decay in all the Parts of Christianity, when the very Sun is eclipsed from us by our Ignorance, and Inconsideration of him: And that so long, it must have dreadful Effects upon us. Therefore let us be exhorted to this Study, to give our Spirits to this Imployment, to think more on God. But as I was saying, there is need of a Rule to measure us in it, and of some Caution about it, that is, that we have our End rightly established, what we aim at in enquiring after, or meditating upon God. If it be only to give Intertainment to the Curiosity of our Minds, as in the Contemplation of natural Things, if it be only to pry into Secrets and Mysteries, and to labour to comprehend that which is incomprehensible, then we lose our Labour, and we are in Danger to meet with a consuming Fire, in stead of instructing and refreshing Light. I would therefore have this guarded against, the insatiable Desire and Greediness of our Minds after the Knowledge of secret Mysteries. We must set Bounds here, and not over-stretch or strain our Understandings, to compass his infinite Being, as it is in itself: Let us rather take him up as he is revealed in the Scriptures, and so meditate on him as manifested in his Word and Works, his Grace, Mercy, Power, Wisdom, &c. and read his Name with Delight in these large Volumes spread before our Eyes, &c.

Now the just measuring and regulating of all Knowledge of God, is to direct it to a further End, to have nothing before us but this, that we may reverence, adore, fear, and love him so much the more: And this is the Thing that maketh Access to him most easy and sweet, when the Design a Soul hath, in all its Searchings about him, is for this Purpose, to the End it may love him, and worship him more suitably, and be more conformed to him, when he is looked upon as a Pattern of our Conformity, that is the right Apprehension and Up-taking of him, to know that *God is Light*, and so to know it, as in it to behold the Necessity of what Qualification should be in us, that is indeed to know God. My Beloved, let us consider that so much we know of God, as we love him, and fear him, and are conformed unto him: For that Knowledge, which is not about this Work and Design; it is for no other Purpose, but to be a Witness against a Man, and the most hainous Aggravation of his Sins.

To come then to the Particular in Hand, *God is Light*, and that is holden out and declared for this End, that there may be Pattern of the Qualification of all that intend to enter into that Society; if ye would have Fellowship with God, then consider what you ingage into, what manner

of Perſon he is; for the intimate Knowledge of one another is preſuppoſed to all conſtant Friendſhip: You muſt know then what God is, if ye would have Communion with him, becauſe there is no Communion without ſome Conformity, and no Conformity without Knowledge of him. Therefore, as he is Light, ſo the Soul muſt be made Light in him, and enlightned by him, that would have his Society: We muſt be transformed into that Nature, and made Children of Light, who were Children of Darkneſs. Now as there is a Light of Underſtanding, and Wiſdom in God, and a Light of Holineſs and Purity, ſo there is in our Souls oppoſite to theſe, a Darkneſs of Ignorance and Unbelief, and a Darkneſs of Sin, and Impurity of Affections. Now *what Communion can Light have with Darkneſs?* Let every Man ask this at his own Heart, if there be no Happineſs without this Society, and no Poſſibility of this Society, while I remain in Darkneſs; then is it not high Time to come to the Light? This then is the firſt Change that is made in a Soul, the Darkneſs of Ignorance and Unbelief is driven out, by the Approach of that glorious Light of the Goſpel into the Heart; then is diſcovered into the Soul that Deformity of Sin, that Lothſomneſs in it ſelf, that it never apprehended; Then there is a Manifeſtation of the hidden Works of Darkneſs, of the deſperate Wickedneſs of the Heart, which lay un-obſerved, and un-ſuſpected all the while, and now a Man cannot in that View but abhor himſelf, for that which none elſe can ſee in him. And there is withal manifeſted that glorious Holineſs and Purity in God, that inviolable Righteouſneſs, that omnipotent Power, which formerly were never ſeriouſly thought upon; now theſe are repreſented to the Life before a Sinner: And to cloſe up all, there is a Manifeſtation of the Grace and Goodneſs of God in Chriſt, which diſcovers a Way of Salvation, and Delivery from Sin and Wrath; and this perfumeth and refreſheth all the Faculties of the Soul. Thus the Soul is in a Part conformed to that original Light, when a Beam is ſent from it, and hath pierced into the Heart, and ſcattered the Darkneſs, that did alienate the Minds of Men from God. But it is not only an Illumination of the Foreface, and Outer-ſide of the Soul, not only a Conviction of the Judgment in theſe Things, but by Vertue of that divine Heat that is tranſmitted with the Light of the Goſpel, the Soul is purified and cleanſed from its groſſer Nature, and ſo is made tranſparent, that the Light may ſhine into the very Inwards of the Heart; and this is the ſpecial Point of Conformity to God, to have our Souls purged from the Darkneſs of ſinful, earthly, and muddy Affections, to have them purified by the Light of God, from all the Works and Luſts of Darkneſs, and the ſhining Beauty of holy Affections and Inclinations, to ſucceed and fill up the vacant Room. If Knowledge only reſide in our Brains, and ſend not down warm Beams to quicken and inflame the Heart, then it is barren and unfruitful, it is cold and unprofitable. If it hover only alone in our Heads, and keep a Motion there, but ſends down no refreſhing Showers to the Affections, which may make us abound in good Fruits, then it is like the windy Clouds, Clouds without Rain, that paſs away without any Benefit to the thirſty Ground. Let us then take this alongs with us, let the Impreſſion of this Deſcription of the Divine Majeſty abide on our Hearts. *God is Light*, and if we often ruminate and

and ponder on this, I think it will make us often to reflect upon our selves, how we are *Darkness*, and this will breed some Carefulness and Desire in the Soul, how to have this Darkness removed, that there may be a Soul capable of divine Illustration. This is it that advanceth the Soul to the neareſt Conformity with God, the looking often upon God, till our Souls be inlightned, and our Hearts purified, and this again puts the Soul in the neareſt Capacity for that blessed Communion with God. *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God*, Mat. v. 8. Truly, it is not Profoundness of Ingine, it is not Acuteness and Sharpness of Wit, it is not Pregnancy in Understanding, or Eminency in Parts, that will dispose the Soul to this blessed Vision of God, and frame it to a Capacity of Fellowship with him; no, there needs no extraordinary Parts for this, nothing but that the Heart be purified from Corruptions, those inward earthly Qualities, that are like so many vitious and gross Humours, filling the Organ of the Sight, these, *Pride, Conceit, Self-love, Passion, Anger, Malice, Envy, Strife, Covetousness, Love of Pleasures, Ambition*; these, I say, that possess the Hearts of the most excellent natural Spirits, casts a Mist upon their Eyes, and hinders them to see God, or enjoy that Delight in him, that some poor, weak, and Ignorant Creatures, whose Hearts the Lord hath purged from Sin, do find in God. Therefore, if any of you have an Aim at this, to have Fellowship with God, know both for your Direction, and your Incouragement, that *God is Light*: For your Direction, because that must be your Pattern, and if you have no Study that Way, to be like him in Holiness, you shall not see him: But take it likewise for an Incouragement, for that Stile carries not only the Necessity of what he must be, but it holds out likewise the Fountain and Store-house of all our Qualifications, for *God is Light*, the original, primitive Light, all must borrow of him, and that Light is freely and impartially communicable to poor Sinners: *With thee is the Fountain of Life, and in thy Light shall we see Light.* Let a Soul that apprehends its own Darkness and Distance from him, thus incourage itself. My Light is but a Beam derived from his Light, and there is no Want in him: He is a *Sun of Righteousness*, if I shut not up my Heart though Unwillingness and Unbelief, if I desire not to keep my Sins, but would be purged from them, then that glorious Light may shine without Stop and Impediment into my Heart: He is not only Light in his own Nature, but he is a Light to us, and if he please to remove that which is interposed between him and us, it shall be Day-light in our Hearts again. Thus a Soul may strengthen itself to wait on him, and by looking thus up to him, and fixing on him, we shall be enlightned, and our Faces not be ashamed.

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SERMON XII.

1 John i. 6. *If we say that we have Fellowship with him, and walk in Darkness, we lie,* &c.

THERE is nothing in which Men suffer themselves to be so easily deceived, as in this highest Concernment of Religion, in which the eternal Interest of their Souls lies: There is no Delusion either so gross, or so universal in any other Thing, as in this Thing, in regard of which, all other Things are nothing. This hath overspread the World, (to speak only of that Part which pretends to Christianity) a strong, pertinacious, and blind Fancy of being in Jesus Christ, and having Interest in Salvation. I call it a blind and ignorant Fancy, for truly Ignorance and Darkness is the strongest Foundation of such Conceits: *Papists* call it *the Mother of Devotion*; it is true, in this Sense it is the Mother of a Man's groundless Devotion towards himself, that is, of Delusion: This, together with Self-love, which always hood-winks the Mind, and will not suffer a serious impartial Examination of a Man's self; these I say, are the Bottom of this vain Perswasion, that possesseth the generality of Men. Now what it wants of Knowledge, it hath of Wilfulness, it is a Conceit altogether void of Reason, but it is so wilful, and pertinacious, that it is almost utterly inconvincible, and so it puts Souls in the most desperate forlorn Estate that can be imagined, it makes them, as the Apostle speaks, *Ephes.* v. 6. υἱὸς τ ἀπειθείας, *Children of Imperswasion*; it is rendred commonly *Children of Disobedience*, and indeed they are joined together, they are Children of Disobedience, carrying the manifest Characters of Wrath upon them; yet they are withal, Children of Imperswasion, uncapable of any Perswasion contrary to these deluding Insinuations of their own Minds, though they be manifest to all Men to be Sons of Disobedience, living in Rebellion against God, yet it is not possible to persuade them of it; they are as far from Conviction of what they are, as Reformation to what they should be. Notwithstanding if Men would but give an impartial and attentive Ear to what the Apostle says here, I suppose the very Frame of his Argument is so convincing, that he could not but leave some Impression: If any Thing will convince a Child of Imperswasion, the Terms here propounded are fittest, *God is Light, and in him is no Darkness.* Hence it follows by inavoidable Consequence, as clear as the Light, that no Man can have Fellowship with God, that walks in Darkness.

Those that delude themselves in this Matter, are of two Kinds, the Generality pretend

pretend to Christianity in general, and to an Interest in Salvation, but if we descend into the chief Parts and Members of Christianity, as Holiness, Fellowship with God, walking after the Spirit, and such like, these they do not so much as pretend to; and withal, think they have a Dispensation from such Strictness, and make it a sufficient Plea that they are not such, because they never professed to be such: Others again, though fewer, can pretend even to these higher Points of Christianity, as Communion with God, walking after the Spirit, and indeed in this they are more consonant to their Profession of Christianity: But, as the Apostle saith, there may be a practical Lie in it too, if we consider and compare their Practice with their Profession.

I would speak a Word by way of Preparation to you who are of the first Sort, that is the very Multitude of Professing Christians, because you do not profess so much as others, and do not give out your selves for the Students of Holiness, you think your selves exempted from the Stroak of all this Soul-piercing Doctrine; you think readily, it is not pertinent to apply this to you, of walking contrary to your Profession, and so committing this gross Lie, in not doing the Truth. *If any say I have Fellowship with God*, &c. And who will say that? say ye. Who will speak such a high Word of himself as this? Therefore since you do not presume so high, you think you have escaped the Censure that follows.

But I beseech you, consider what your Professions import, and what you ingage your selves to, even by the general Profession of Christianity. I know you will all say you are Christians, and hope to be saved. Now do ye understand what is included in that, if any Man say, that he is a Christian, he really says that he hath Fellowship with God; if any Man say, he is a Christian, he says he hath Fellowship with Christ, and is Partaker of his Spirit; for as the Apostle, *Rom.* viii. 9. declares unto you, *If any have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his*; that is, he is no Christian. For what is it, I pray you, to be a Christian? Is it not to be *a new Creature*, formed again by the Spirit of Christ? 2 *Cor.* v. 17. Therefore in as far as you pretend to be Christians, and yet are not Professors of Holiness, and think you have a Dispensation from such a walking in God, and after Christ, you fall under a twofold Contradiction, and commit a twofold Lie: *First*, Between your Profession and Practice; then in your Profession itself: Your Practice is directly cross to the very general Profession of Christianity. But besides that, there is a Contradiction in the Bosom of your Profession; you affirm you are Christians, and yet refuse the Profession of Holiness; you say ye hope for Heaven, and yet do not so much as pretend to Godliness, and walking spiritually. Nay, these you disjoin in your Profession, which are really one, without which the Name of Christianity is an empty, vain, and ridiculous Appellation. There must be then a great Darkness of Misapprehension in your Minds, that you take on the Name of Christians, and will not know what it imports; and therefore in the mean Time, you profess that which destroys and annul's your former Profession. Now certainly, this is a grosser Lie, a flatter Contradiction, than it needs much Enquiry into, to find it out. It is so plapable, that I wonder that these very common and received Principles of Truth, do not rise up within, to testifie against it. For if ye do not own the Profession of Holiness and Communion

munion with God, what Advantage have you then of Christianity? tell me, What will it serve you for? Can it save you? Can a bare, empty, contradicted, and blasphemed Title save you? and if it do not save you, it will make your Condemnation the greater. Let this then first be settled in our Hearts, and laid down as a Principle, that the most general Profession of Christianity lays an inviolable Bond and Obligation upon us, to all that is imported in the particular Expressions of a Christian's Nature, Walk, and Society; whether we take it so or not, thus it is: To be a Christian infolds all that can be said; and if it do not import these, it is not true to its own Signification, nor conformed to Christ's meaning. You may deprave the World as you please, and deform that holy Calling so, as it may suit to your Carriage, but according to this Word in this Acceptation of it, you shall be judged: And if your Judge shall in that great Day lay all this great Charge upon you, what will it avail you now to absolve your selves in your Imaginations, even from the very Obligation it self.

Let us suppose then, that you are convicted of this, that Christianity in the most general and common Acceptation, is inclusive of Fellowship and Communion with God, and that you profess and pretend to both; then let us apply this just Rule of the Apostle's, to examine the Truth and Reality of such a Profession. The Rule is straight, and so may be a Trial both of that which is straight and crooked. *Rectum sui & obliqui index:* And here the Application being made, there is a Discovery of the Falshood and Crookedness of most Mens Hearts; this Golden Rule of Examination is a Rule of Proportion, so to speak, or it is founded upon the Harmony that should be between Profession and Practice, Words and Deeds, and upon that Conformity should interceed between those that have Communion one with another. Now apply these to the generality of Christians, and behold there is no Harmony and Consent between their speaking and walking; their Calling and Profession, as Christians, imports Communion with God, who is the *pure unmixt Light*, and yet they declare otherwise, that themselves are in Darkness of Ignorance, and walk in the Darkness of Sin, and so that Communion must be pretended, where there is no Conformity and Likeness to God intended: The Result then of all is this, herein is the greatest Lie, and most dangerous withall, committed, it is the greatest Lie, because it takes in all a Man's Conversation, which all along makes up one great universal Lie, a Lie composed of infinite Contrarieties, of innumerable particular Lies; for every Step, every Word, and Action, is in its own Nature contrary to that holy Profession, but all combined together, makes up a black Constellation of Lies; one powerful Lie against the Truth. And besides, it is not against a particular Truth, but against the whole Complex of Christianity. And Error is a Lie against such a particular Truth as it opposeth; but the Tract and Course of an ignorant, ungodly Conversation, is one continued Lie, against the whole Bulk and Body of Christianity. It is a Lie drawn the length of many Weeks, Months, and Years, against the whole Frame of Christian Profession: For there is nothing in the Calling of a Christian, that is not retracted, contradicted, and reproached by it. Oh, that ye could unbowel your own Ways, and see what a Cluster of Lies and Incongruites is in them, what Reproaches and

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Calumnies these practical Lies cast upon the Honour of your Christian Calling, how they tend of their own Nature, to the disgracing of the Truth, and the blaspheming of God's Name. These Things ye would find, if ye would rip up your own Hearts and Ways, and if you found how great that Lie is, you could not but fear the Danger of it; for it being no less then a denying of Jesus Christ, and a real Abrenunciation of him, it puts you without the Refuge of Sinners, and is most likely to keep you without the blessed City, for *there shall in no ways enter therein any Thing that defileth, or maketh a Lie*, Rev. xxi. 27. What shall then become of them whose Life all alongs is but one continued Lie.

SERMON XIII.

1 Joh. i. 6. *If we say that we have Fellowship with him, and walk in Darkness, we lie*, &c.

THAT which is the Sum of Religion, Sincerity, and a Correspondency betweeen Profession and Practice, that is confirmed by Reason, and much strengthned by Nature it self; so that Religion, Reason, and Nature, conspire in one, to hold out the Beauty and Comliness of Sincerity, and to put a Note and Character of Infamy and Deformity upon all Hypocrisie and Deceit, especially in the Matters of Religion. There is nothing so contrary to Religion, as a false Appearance, a Shew of that which is not: For Religion is a most intire and equable Thing, like it self, harmonious in all the Parts of it, the same within and without, in Expression and Action, all Correspondent together. Now to marr this Harmony, and to make it up of unequal, dissimilar Parts, and to make one Part give the Lie to the other, the Course of a Man's Life, in Ignorance, Negligence, and Sin, proclaiming contrary to the Profession of Christianity: This is to make Religion a monstruous Thing, to deny the Nature of it, and in our Imaginations to contrive an impossible Union of inconsistent Things. It is a Creature made up of Contradictions, which can have no Subsistence in the Truth, but only in the Fancies of deluded Souls; one professing Christianity, and so by Consequence Fellowship with the *original Light, the Sun of Righteousness*, and yet Darkness of Ignorance possessing the Mind, and the Heart carried away in the Ways of the Lusts of Ignorance, and walking in that Darkness; this is a Monster in Christianity, one so far mishappen, that the very outward Form and Visage of it doth not remain. But I told you, Reason confirms this, for what more suitable to the very natural Frame and Constitution of a reasonable Being, than that the outward Man should be the Image and Expression of the inward, and that they should

anſwer one another, as Face anſwers Face in the Water; that the Tongue ſhould be the Interpreter of the Mind, and the Actions of a Man's Life the Interpreter of his Tongue. Here is that beautiful Proportion, and that pleaſing Harmony, when all theſe, though different in their own Nature, yet conjoin together, and make up one ſweet Concord. Now truly, if we take upon us the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and yet our ordinary and habitual Speeches are carnal and earthly, never ſalted with Grace, often poiſoned with Blaſphemies, Oaths and Curſings, and often defiled with filthy Speeches, and often intermingled with Reproaches of others; if our Converſation be conformed to the Courſe of the World, according to theſe Luſts that hurry away Multitudes of Mankind to Perdition, and look to the Heart within, and behold never any Labour about the purifying of it from Corruption, never any Mortification of evil Affections, and little or no Knowledge of the Truth, not ſo much as may let Chriſt into the Soul: This, I ſay, is as unreaſonable and abſurd, as it is irreligious: It wholly perverts that beautiful Order, makes an irreconcileable Diſcord between all the Parts in Man, that neither Mind, nor Mouth, nor Hands anſwer one another, nor all of them, or any of them anſwer that holy Calling a Man pretends to. Such a one pretends ordinarily the Goodneſs of his Heart towards God, but now the Tongue cannot interpret the Heart, it is exauctorated out of that natural Office, for the ordinary Current is contrary to that pretended Goodneſs of the Heart; *For a good Man, out of the good Treaſure of his Heart, ſendeth forth good Things*, but all theſe are either Evil, or never ſeaſoned with that ſpiritual Goodneſs. Then the Ways and Actions of a Man's Life, which ought to interpret and expound his Profeſſions, theſe are rendered altogether incapable of that, they give no Confirmation to them, but rather a manifeſt Contradiction, for what are your multiplied Oaths, Drunkenneſſes, Fornications, Railings, Contentious, Lyings, Sabbath-profanations? Your woful Neglect of Prayer in ſecret, and in your Families, your continuing in theſe Evils that ever you walked into; what are they, I ſay, but a manifeſt Violation of both Religion and Reaſon, and a clear Confirmation that *ye are Liers, and the Truth is not in you?*

There is ſomething even in Nature to declare the Abſurdity and Unnaturalneſs of this general Diſcordance between Mens Profeſſion and Practice. Look upon all the Creatures, and do they not all with one Voice proclaim Sincerity? Hath not every Beaſt, and every Bird its own outward Shape, outward Geſture, and Voice, and external Workings, which declare the inward Nature of it? And is not this a ſtaple-known Rule in Nature, that every Thing is known by the Effects of it? A Lion by his roaring, a Lark by its ſinging, a Horſe by his neighing, and an Ox by his lowing, *&c.* All theſe ſpeak forth nothing but Sincerity, in ſo much, that if theſe Marks and Signs ſhould be confounded, and Beaſts uſe them indifferently, all human Knowledge ſhould ſuddenly fall to nothing, this would put ſuch a Confuſion, both in the World and Mankind. O, how doth this condemn thoſe who pretend to this high Calling of Chriſtianity? and yet there is no Way left to diſcern them by, nothing appearing in them, and ordinarily proceeding from them, which may give a Signification of the inward Truth of their Fellowſhip with

with God; but rather that which gives a Demonstration of the Vanity of the Pretension. There were no Consent in Nature, if that were not, neither is there any harmonious Agreement in Religion, where this Proportion and Correspondence is not kept in a Man's Life. The very Heathens did not account them Philosophers, but those that expressed their Doctrines in Works, as well as Words; and truly, the livelieſt Image of Truth is in Practice: They commended them that were sparing in Words, and abundant in Deeds; who had short Speeches, but long and large Discourses in their Life, and what is this, but that which our Saviour every where, from his own Example, inculcats upon us. These Words are emphatick, *To do the Truth, to walk in the Light, to do his Words, to believe with the Heart*, and such like: All which declare, that in so far we have the Truth, and have Fellowship with the Light, as it is impressed in the Affection, and expressed again in the Conversation; for the *infinite Truth*, and the *infinite Life*, is one, and the *original Light*, and *primitive Life and Love*, is one too, and whoever truly receives the Truth and Light, as it is, cannot but receive him, as the *living Truth*, and *Life-giving Light*, and so be heated and warmed inwardly by his Beams, which will certainly cause some Stirring and Working without: For as much as in Nature, Heat is always working, so is the Fire of Love, kindled in the Heart, incessant that Way, *Faith working by Love*; for Action is the very Life of Life, that which both shews it, and preserves it.

Now what shall we say, to carry these Things home to your Hearts? Where shall convincing Words be had which may break the Hardness of your Hearts? It is strange that you are in such a deep Dream of Delusion, that nothing can awake you out of it? And how little is it that you have to please your selves into? Some external Privilges, *the Temple of the Lord, his Covenant, and the Seals of it, your ordinary hearing the Word*, and such like: But are there not many Things in your Hearts and Ways, that act the most contradictory Lie to these that can be? For wherefore do we thus meet together? Do ye know an End, or propose any? I scarce believe it of the most Part. We come out of Custom, and many as by Constraint, and with little or no previous Consideration of the great End of this Work; and when ye go forth, what Fruit appears? Your ordinary, carnal and civil Discourses succeed; and who is it either bows his Knee to pray for the Divine Blessing, or entertains that holy Word either in his own Meditation, or speaks of it to the Edification of others? Are you not, the most Part of you, that Ground of which Christ speaks, *that lyes in the Way Side*, and every Thing comes and takes the Seed up? Do ye either listen and apply your Hearts to a Presentness in Hearing? Or is there any more Account of it, than a Sound in the Ear, or any Footstep or Impression left in the Heart, more than of the Flight of a Bird in the Air? And alas! how many Souls are choaked and stifled? the Truth suffocated in the very springing, by the Thorns of the Cares of this World, and the Throng and Importunity of Businesses, and earthly Desires? How many good Motions come to no Maturity by this Means? How few of you use to pray in Secret, and to dedicate a Time for Retirement from the World, and Enjoyment of God? Nay, you think you are not called to it, and if

any be induced to it, and to publick Worſhip in their Families, yet all the Day over is but a flat Contradiction to that: What earthly Mindedneſs? What Unholineſs of Affection? What Impurity of Converſation? What one Luſt is ſubdued? What one Sin mortified? Who increaſeth more in Knowledge of the Truth, or in Love of God? Is it not Midnight with moſt Part of you? O the Darkneſs of the Ignorance of your Minds, by which you know not that Religion you profeſs, more than *Turks* who do preſecute it! And what are the Ways ye walk into? Are they not ſuch Ways, as *will not come to the Light, and hate the Light, becauſe it reproves them?* John iii. 19, 20. and xi. 9, 10. Are they not ſuch, in which Men ſtumble, though they ſeem to walk eaſily and plainly into them? Yet, O that everlaſting Stumble that is at the End of them! when you ſhall fall out of one Darkneſs of Sin and Deluſion, into an utter Extreme, eternal Darkneſs of Deſtruction and Damnation. O that fearful Dungeon, and Pit of Darkneſs you poſt into! Therefore, if you love your own Souls, be warned. I beſeech you be warned to flee from that utter Darkneſs, be awaked out of your deceiving Dreams, and deluding ſelf-flattering Imaginations, and *Chriſt ſhall give you Light.* The Diſcovery of that groſs Darkneſs you walked into, in which you did not ſee whither you went; I ſay, the clear diſcerning of what it is, and whether it leads, is the firſt Opening of that *Light*, the firſt Viſit of that *Morning-Star, that brings Salvation.*

If ye will not be convinced of that infinite Danger you are in, yet ye are not the further from it. *He that walketh in Darkneſs lieth*, &c. His ſtrong Confidence and Perſwaſion hath a Lie, a Contradiction in the Boſom of it, and that will never bottom any true Happineſs. It is a Lie acted by the Hand, the Foot, and all the Members: A Lie againſt the holy Truth and Word of God, and the very Reproach of the Name of Chriſt; a Lie againſt your ſelves, and your own Profeſſions, a Soul-murdering Lie, as well as a Chriſt-denying Lie: And this Lie (as a holy Man ſaith) hath filled Houſes, Cities, Families, Countries; it hath even overſpread the whole Nation; and filled all with Darkneſs, Horror, Confuſion, Trouble and Anguiſh; once being a holy Nation by Profeſſion of a Covenant with God, and our open, manifeſt, univerſal Retraction of that, by an unholy, ungodly and wicked Converſation: This hath brought the Sword againſt a hypocritical Nation, and this will bring that far greater, incomparably more intolerable Day of Wrath upon the Children of Diſobedience. Therefore let me exhort all of you, in the Name of the Lord, as ye deſire to be admitted to that eternally bleſſed Society, within the holy City, and not to be excluded among theſe, *who commit Abomination, and make a Lie*, that ye would henceforth impoſe this Neceſſity upon your ſelves, or know that it is laid upon you by God, to labour to know the Will and Truth of God, that you may ſee that Light that ſhines in the Goſpel; and not only to receive it in your Minds, but in your Hearts by Love, that ſo you may endeavour in all Sincerity, the doing of that Truth, the conſcionable practiſing of what you know. And this, as it is a great Point of Conformity to the Light, ſo it will make you capable of more Light from God; for he delights to ſhew his Liberality, where he hath any Acceptance. Be not ſatisfied, O! be not ſatisfied with know-

knowing these Truths, and discoursing upon them; but make them further your own, by impressing them deeply in your Hearts, and expressing them plainly in your Ways. *This is pure Religion and undefiled*, James i. 27. *And is not this to know me, saith the Lord?* Jer. xxii. 16. Practice is real Knowledge, because it is living Knowledge; it is the very Life and Soul of Christianity, when there needs no more but the Intimation of his Will to carry the whole Man: This is that we should all aspire unto, and not satisfie our selves in our poor Attainments below this.

SERMON XIV.

1 John i. 7. *But if we walk in the Light, as he is in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin.*

ART is the Imitation of Nature, and true Religion is a divine Art, that consists in the Imitation of *God himself*, the Author of Nature. Therefore it is a more high and transcendent Thing, of a sublimer Nature, than all the Arts and Sciences among Men; those reach but to some Resemblance of the Wisdom of God, expressed in his Works; but this aspires to an Imitation of himself in Holiness, which is the Glory of his Name, and so to a Fellowship with himself. Therefore there is nothing hath so high a Pattern, or sublime an End; *God himself*, who is infinitely above all, is the Pattern, and Society with *God* is the End of it: And so it cannot choice, but where Religion makes a solid Impression on a Soul; it must exceedingly raise and advance it to the most heroick and noble Resolutions that it is capable of, in respect of which Elevation of the Soul after *God*, the highest Projects, the greatest Aspirings, and the most elevating Designs of Men, are nothing but low, base and wretched, having nothing of true Greatness of Mind in them, but running in an earthly and sordid Channel, infinitely below the poorest Soul, that is lifted up to *God*.

Since we have then so high a Pattern as *God*, because he is infinitely removed from us in his own Nature, we have him expressed to us under the Name and Notion of *Light*, which makes all Things manifest. Not only as dwelling in *inaccessible Light*; that is, in his own incomprehensible, ineffable Essence, even before this Light was created; for *he is in the Light, and was in the Light*, when there was no Sun to give Light, because he was in himself invironed (so to speak) with the infinite Light and Splendor of his own Understanding, and

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Beauty of his own Holineſs, and ſo dwelling in an *all Fulneſs*, and *Self-ſufficiency* of Bleſſedneſs. Not only is he thus in the *Light*, but he is *a Light* to poor Sinners, the moſt communicative *Being*, that ceaſeth not continually to ſend forth Streamings of that Light and Life, into dark and dead Souls; and therefore he is not only *Light in himſelf*, but a *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, moſt beneficial in his Influences, moſt impartial and free in his Illumination; and ſo he is often called, *my Light, and my Salvation, our Light, a Light to me*, Pſal. xxvii. 1. *Micah* vii. 8. *Iſa.* xlii. 6, 7. Now, it is this Emiſſion of *Light* from him, that firſt drives away that groſs Darkneſs that is over Souls; for till then, in the Darkneſs all was hid and covered, nothing ſeen, neither our ſelves, nor God, neither the Temper of our Hearts, nor the Courſe of our Ways, nor the End they lead to: But it is the breaking in of a Beam of that *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, that maketh any ſuch Diſcovery; as Motes are not ſeen till the Sun ſhine, though the Houſe be full of them. In Darkneſs there is nothing but Confuſion and Diſorder; and Light only makes that Diſorder viſible to the Soul, to the affecting of the Heart. Now, when once the Soul hath received that Light, there is a Deſire kindled in the Heart after more of it; as when the Eye hath once perceived the Sweetneſs and Pleaſantneſs of the Light, it opens it ſelf, and expoſeth it ſelf to a fuller Reception of more: And ſo the Soul that is once thus happily prevented by the firſt Salutation and Viſit of *that Day-ſpring from on high, while he was ſitting in Darkneſs, and in the Shadow of Death*, Luke i. 78, 79. afterward, follows after that Light, and deſires nothing more, than to be imboſomed with it: That tender preventing Mercy ſo draws the Heart after it, that it can never be at perfect Reſt, till the Night be wholly ſpent, and all the Shadows of it removed, and the Sun clearly up above the Horizon, and that is the Day of that clear Viſion of *God's Face*. But in the mean Time, this is the great Ambition and Endeavour of ſuch an One, to walk in that Light, and this is the very Entertainment of that Fellowſhip with God; he is already in the Light, that is to ſay, he is tranſlated from a State of Darkneſs to Light, and indued with the living and ſaving Knowledge of *God in Jeſus Chriſt*, this is his State; he is in the Light, one enlightned from above, having his Eyes opened to diſcover the Myſtery of the Iniquity of his own Heart, and to ſee far off, to that bottomleſs Pit of Miſery, which his Way would lead him to; one who hath by this divine Illuſtration diſcovered eternal Things, and *ſeen Things not ſeen*; and withal, gotten ſome Knowledge of Salvation by the Remiſſion of Sins. Now, ſuch an One, being thus in the Light; his Duty is, and his infinite Dignity beſides, to walk in that Light, that is, to lead all his Life under that eternal Light of *God*, which ſhines in the Word, and to bring it all forth in his View; to make our whole Courſe a progreſſive Motion towards Heaven, wherein that *glorious Light* ſhines moſt gloriouſly. It is almoſt all one with that of *Paul's, to have our Converſation in Heaven*; for, *to walk in the Light*, it is a Kind of Elevation of our Actions, a raiſing them up to Heaven, to that pure Light; for after that, and toward that, is the Soul's Deſign.

Now to expreſs to you in what it conſiſts, I deſire not to branch it forth in many

many Particulars, which rather distract the Mind, than affect the Heart; only you may know, it consists especially into the inward Retirements of the Soul to *God*, and the outward shining of that Light, in our Conversation to others. These are the chief Parts of it, borrowing from his Light, and then lending and imparting it to others, by a holy Conversation. Truly, we must needs conceive, That the most lively and unmixt partaking of the *Light of God*, and the sweetest Society with him, is in the secret Withdrawings of the Soul from the World, and reposes upon God, those little Intervals, and, as it were, stoln Hours of Fellowship with *God*, that are taken from the Multitude and Throng of our Business; these are the fittest Opportunities of the transforming the Soul into his Similitude, and of *purifying it as he is pure*, of filling it with divine Light and Love; for then the Heart lyes, as it were, perpendicularly under his Beams, and is opened before him, to give Admission and Entry to this saving, transforming Light; and it is the Shining of God's Countenance then upon the Soul, that draws it most towards Conformity with him, and leaves an Impression of Light and Love upon the Soul. Oh, that you were more acquainted with this, this Apritation, so to speak, that is, Sunning your selves, and warming in the Sun, the exposing and opening of your Hearts frequently in Secret, before this *Sun of Righteousness*. Now this, if you were acquaint with it, *would make your Light so to shine before Men, as your heavenly Father may be glorified*, Mat. v. 16. and that is the walking in that Light of God. This makes a Christian to come forth, as *Moses* from the Mount, with his Face shining; he comes out from the retired Access to *God*, with a Lustre upon his Carriage, that may beautify the Gospel; and (as one saith well) with the Tables of the Law in both his Hands, written in his Practice, the Light of the Law shining in his Life; and truly this is the Christian's diurnal Motion in his lower Sphere, wherein he carries about that Light that is derived from the *higher Light*; in all his Converse with Men, it shines from him to the glorifying of him that is *the Father of Lights*, walking righteously and soberly, without Offence, *doing Good to all, especially the Children of Light*; extending Offices of Love and Benevolence to every one; forbearing and forgiving Offences, not partaking with other Mens Sins. And finally, declaring in Word and Deed, That we have Communion with the Fountain of *pure Light*, and one Day expect to be translated out of this lower Orb, where we are so far distant from him, and fixed in the highest of all; where we may have the immediate, full, uninterrupted, and clearest Aspect of his Countenance, which shall then make the Description that is here given of God communicable to us, that, *as he is Light, and in him is no Darkness*, so we being fully and perfectly shined upon by him, may be Light likewise, without any Mixture of Darkness, as here it is not.

Now, my Beloved in the Lord, this is that we are called unto, to walk thus in the Light, in the Light of Obedience and Sanctification; and that is the great Thing ye would learn to aspire unto, rather than to enjoy the Light of Consolation: Indeed I conceive, that which maketh many of us *walk in Darkness*, as is spoken in *Isa.* l. 10. that is, without Comfort, Peace and Joy, and without

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clear discerning our Interest in God, is, because we walk in another Darkness, that is, of Sin and Distance from God: The one Darkness is introductive of the other; nay, they cannot be long without other, the dark Cloud of bold sinning, and careless uncircumspect walking, that cannot but eclipse the Light of Consolation, and fill the Soul with some Horror, Anguish and Confusion. Therefore, if ye would walk in the Light of Joy and Comfort, O take heed nothing be interposed between *God* and your Souls: You must likewise walk in the Light of his Law, which is, as *a Lamp to the Feet*; and this Light, as the Ray, begets that Light of Comfort, as the Splendor, which is the second Light of the Sun. I know it is a disconsolate and sad Condition, to walk without the Light of the Knowledge of our Interest in *God*; but I would earnestly recommend unto you two Things to support you, and help you in that; one is, that you do not give over the chief Point of this Society with God, that is, walking in the Light of his Law and Commandments, but that you do the more seriously address to the one, that you want the other. Certainly, it ought to be no Hinderance of your Obedience, and patient continuing in Obedience, that you know not your own Interest, and that his Countenance shines not so upon you; you know that sweet Resolution, *I will wait upon the Lord, who hides his Face*, &c. *Isa.* viii. 17. *Mic.* vii. 7. and his own Command, *Isa.* l. 10. *Hos.* xii. 6. *Ye that walk in such a Darkness*, nevertheless, *stay upon God.* Truly there could be no greater Evidence of thy Interest than this, to give patient Attendance upon him in the Ways of Obedience, till he shine forth; this would in due Time *bring forth thy Righteousness as the Light*, if we would not substract and withdraw our selves from under the Light, because it is presently over-clouded. Then, moreover you would know, that all this While that your Interest in Christ lyes dark, and under Cloud, you would then be most in the Application of that Blood to your Souls, most in trusting and staying upon the *Name of God*, and his absolute Promises: Suppose thou do not as yet know that he is thine, yet dost thou not know that he is made thine, by believing in him? And therefore, while it is inevident that it is already, thou ought so much the more to labour, that what is not, may be. Now, if thou canst not apply him to thy Soul, as thine own Possession; yet thou mayest, and so much the more oughtest to apply thy Soul to him, and resign and offer thy self to him, as willing to be his Possession, to be his, and no more thine own. In a Word, when thine own experimental Feeling of the Work of God's Spirit fails within thee; then so much the more insist, and dwell upon the Meditation and Belief of the general Promises, which are the proper Object of Faith, and not of Sense: As our own Interest is the proper Object of Sense, and not of Faith; therefore the Defect in the one, needs not resound upon the other. To sum up all in one Word, if thou thinkest that thou hast not yet believed in Christ, and hath no Interest in him; I will not dispute with thee, to perswade thee that thou art mistaken, for all this Debate would be in the Dark, because thou art in Darkness: But one Thing I would say unto thee, labour to do that which thou would do, which thou must do, if such a Case were granted; suppose it were so, that thou had no Interest in him, what would thou

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do then? I am sure thou would say, I would labour by any Means to have him *mine*; why then, thou knows that cannot be before believing, and receiving him on his Promises, and not at all, but by believing. Therefore, since that this is it you must at length turn unto, suppose the Case were decided, why do ye not presently, rather without more wearying your selves, in the Greatness of your Way, turn in hither, as to a Place of Refuge, without further disputing in the Business; and so by believing in *Christ*, and waiting upon him in his Ways, you shall put that out of Question, which debating would make an endless Question. The Lord make you wise to know the Things that belong to your Peace.

SERMON XV.

1 John i. 7.——*And the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin.*

CAN two walk together except they be agreed? As Darkness cannot have Fellowship with Light, till it be changed into some Conformity to the Light; even so there can neither be any Fellowship in walking, nor Conformity in Nature, between God and us, who are Enemies to him by Nature, unless there be some Agreement and Reconciliation of the Difference. Now, here is that which maketh the Atonement, *The Blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all Sin.* This is it that takes away the Difference between *God and Men*, and makes Reconciliation for us; this Blood hath quenched the Flame of Indignation and Wrath kindled in Heaven against us. And this alone can quench and extinguish the Flames and Furies of a tormented Soul, that is burnt up with the Apprehension of his Anger: All other Things thou can apply, or cast upon them, will be as Oil to increase them, whether it be to cool thy self in the Shadows of the World's Delights, such a poor Shift as the rich Glutton would have taken in Hell; those Drops of cold Water that thou canst distil out of the Creature, will never give any solid Ease to thy Conscience; thou may abate the Fury of it, or put it off for a Season; thou who art afraid of Hell and Wrath, may procure some short Vacancy from those Terrors, by turning to the World: But certainly they will recur again, and break out in a greater Fire, like a Fever that is not diminished, but increased by much drinking cold Water: Or if thou go about to refresh thy self, and satisfie thy Challenges by thy own Attainments in Religion, and by Reflection upon thy own Heart and Ways, finding something in thy Esteem, that may counterballance thy Evils, and so give thee some Confidence of *God's* Favour; these, I say, are but deceitful Things, and will never either quench the

Displeasure of *God* for thy Sins, but rather add Fewel to it, because thou justifies thy self, which is an Abomination before him; nor yet will it totally extinguish and put to Silence the Clamours of thy Conscience, but that some Day thou shalt be spoiled of all that Self-confidence, and Self-defence, and find thy self so much the more displeasing to *God*, that thou did please thy self, and undertook to pacifie him. Therefore, my Beloved, let me above all Things recommend this unto you, as the prime Foundation of all Religion, upon which all our Peace with *God*, and Pardon of Sin, and Fellowship with *God* must be built, that the Blood of Jesus Christ be applied unto your Consciences by believing; and that, first of all, upon the Discovery of your Enmity with *God*, and infinite Distance from him, you apply your Hearts *unto this Blood*, which is the Atonement, to *the reconciling Sacrifice*, which alone hath Virtue and Power with *God*. Do not imagine that any Peace can be without this; would ye walk with *God*, which is a Bridge of Agreement? Would ye have Fellowship with *God*, which is a Fruit of Reconciliation? Would ye have Pardon of Sins, and the particular Knowledge of it, which is the greatest Effect of Favour? And all this, without and before Application of *Christ who is our Peace, in whom the Father only is well pleased*; will ye seek these, and yet dispute this Point of Believing, as if it were possible to attain these without the Sprinkling of that Blood on the Heart, which indeed cleanseth it from an evil accusing Conscience? If you desire to *walk in the Light, as he is in the Light*, why weary ye your selves in By-ways? Why take ye such a Compass of endless and fruitless Agitation, and Perplexity of Mind? And will not rather come straightway at it, by the Door of *Jesus Christ*, for he is the *new and living Way*, into which you must enter, if ye would walk in the Light; and the Wounds of his Side, out of which this Blood gushed, these open you a Way of Access to him, because he was pierced for us. That Stream of Blood, if ye come to it, and follow it all along, it will certainly carry you to the Sea of Light and Love, where you may have Fellowship with *God*. And O, how much Comfort is in it, that there is such a Stream running all the Way of our walking with *God*? all the Way of our Fellowship? That Fountain of *Christ's Blood* runs not dry, but runs along with the Believer, for the cleansing of his After-pollutions, of his Defilements, even in the very Light itself: This then, as it is the first Foundation of Peace and Communion with *God*, so it is the perpetual Assurance and Confirmation of it, that which first gives Boldness, and that alone which still continues Boldness in it. It is the first Ground, and the constant Warrand and Security of it, without which it would be as soon dissolved as made: If that Blood did not run along all this Way, to wash all his Steps; if the Way of Light and Fellowship with *God* were not watered, and refreshed with the continual Current of this Blood, certainly none could walk in it without being consumed; therefore it is, that the Mercy *of God*, and Riches of Grace *in Christ*, hath provided this Blood for us, both to cleanse the Sins of Ignorance, before believing, and the Sins of Light, after believing, that a poor Sinner may constantly go on his Way, and not be broken off from *God*, by his Infirmities and Escapes in the Way.

You see then the Gospel runs in these two

two golden Streams, *Pardon of Sin*, and *Purity of Walking*; they run undividedly, all along in one Channel; yet without Confusion one with another, as it is reported of some great Rivers, that run together between the same Banks, and yet retain distinct Colours and Natures all the Way, till they part: But *these Streams that glad the City of God*, never part one from another; the cleansing Blood, and the purifying Light, these are the entire and perfect Sum of the Gospel; Purification from Sin, the Guilt of Sin, and the Purity of walking in the Light, flowing from that, make up the full Complexion of Christianity; which are so nearly conjoyned together, that if they be divided, they cease to be, and cannot any of them subsist, save in Mens deluded Imagination. The End of washing in the Blood of *Christ* is, that we may come to this Light, and have Fellowship with it; for the Darkness of Hell, the utter Darkness of the Curse of God, which overspreads the unbelieving Soul, and ecclipses all the Light of God's Countenance from him, that dark and thick Cloud of Guiltiness, that Heap of unrenewed Conversation; this, I say, must be removed by the cleansing of the *Blood of Christ*, and then the Soul is admitted to enjoy that Light, and walk into it. And it is removed chiefly for this End, that there may be no Impediment in the Way of this Fellowship; this Blood cleanseth, that you being cleansed, may henceforth walk in Purity; and there is no Purity like that of the Light of *God's Countenance* and Commands: And so you are washed in the Blood of *Christ*, that you may walk in the Light of *God*, and take heed that you defile not your Garments again. But if so be (and certainly it will be, considering our Weakness) that you defile your selves again, like foolish Children, who after they have washed, run to the Puddle again, forgetting that they were cleansed; if either your daily Infirmities trouble, or some grosser Pollution defile and waste your Conscience, know that this Blood runs all along in the same Channel of your Obligation to holy walking; and it is as sufficient now as ever, to cleanse you from all Sin, from Sins of daily Incursion, and Sins of a grosser Nature; there is no Exception in that Blood, let there be none in your Application to it, and Apprehension of it. Now, this is not to give Boldness to any Man to sin, or continue in Sin, because of the lenghtned Use, and continued Virtue and Efficacy of the Blood of *Christ*; for if any Man draw such a Result from it, and improve it to the Advantage of his Flesh, he declares himself to have no Portion in it, never to have been washed by it; for what Soul can in Sobriety look upon that Blood shed by the *Son of God, to take away the Sins of the World*, and find an emboldning to Sin from that View? Who can wash and cleanse here, and presently think of Defilement, but with Indignation?

I speak these Things the rather, because there is a twofold Misapprehension of the Gospel among Christians, and on both Hands much Darkness and Stumbling is occasioned. We have poor narrow Spirits, and do not take entire Truth in its full Comprehension, and so we are as unfit and unequal Discerners of the Gospel, and Receivers of it, as he that would judge of a Sentence by one Word, of a Book by one Page, of a Harmony by one Note, and of the World by one Parcel of it. The Beauty and Harmony of Things consists in their entire Union;

and though there ſhould appear many Diſcrepancies, and unpleaſant Diſcords in ſeveral Parts, yet all united together, makes up a pleaſant Conſort. Now this is our childiſh Fooliſhneſs, that we look upon the Goſpel only by Halfs, and this being alone ſeen, begets Miſapprehenſions and Miſtakes in our Minds; for ordinarily we ſupply that which we ſee not with ſome Fancy of our own. When the Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt* is holden out in its full Virtue, in the large Extent of its Efficacy, to cleanſe all Sin, and to make Peace with God, and wipe away all Tranſgreſſions, as if they had never been, the Generality of you never apprehending much your own deſperate Condition, nor conceiving an abſolute Neceſſity of a Change, you think this is all that is in the Goſpel, and begin to flatter your ſelves, and *bleſs your ſelves, though you live in the Imaginations of your own Hearts*, and never apprehend the abſolute Need, and inevitable Sequel of walking in Purity after Pardon. And alas, there is ſomething of this ſometimes overtakes the Hearts of true Believers, in the ſlight and overly Conſideration of the Mercy *of God*, and Blood *of Chriſt*: You do not lay the Conſtraint upon your Hearts to a holy Converſation. I ſay, it is not becauſe you apprehend that Blood, that you take more Liberty to the Fleſh, but rather becauſe you too ſlightly and ſuperficially conſider it, and that but the one Half of it, without piercing into the proper End of that cleanſing, which is, that we may walk in Purity.

But on the other Hand, ſome believing Souls, having their Deſires enlarged after more Holineſs and Conformity to God, and apprehending not only the Neceſſity of it, but the Beauty and Comlineſs of it: Yet finding withal, how infinitely ſhort they come, and how oft their Purpoſes are broken and diſappointed, and themſelves plunged in the Mire of their own Filthineſs; this doth diſcourage them, and drives them to ſuch a Deſpondency and Dejection of Spirit, that they are like to give over the Way of Holineſs as deſperate. Now my Beloved, for you who look upon the Goſpel by a Parcel, and ſuch a Parcel as injoins much upon you; I would earneſtly beſeech, to open and enlarge your Hearts to receive the full Body of the Truth, to look upon that cleanſing Blood, as well as that pure Light; to conſider the perpetual Uſe of the one, until you have fully attained the other. Know that the Fountain is kept open, and not ſhut; not only to admit you to come at firſt, but to give ready Acceſs in all After-defilements; and there is no Word more comprehenſive than this here, *it cleanſeth from all Sin*. All thy Exceptions, Doubts and Difficulties, are about ſome particular Sins, and Circumſtances; thy Debates run upon ſome Exception; but here is an univerſal comprehenſive Word, that excludes all Exception; no Kind of Sin, either for Quality, or Degree, or Circumſtance, is too great for this Blood; and therefore, as you have Reaſon to be humbled under your Failings, ſo there is no Reaſon to be diſcouraged, but rather to revive your Spirits and Vigour again, in the Study of this Walking in the Light, knowing that one Day we ſhall be *in the Light, as he is in it*. Nay, take this alongs with you, as your Strength, and Encouragement to your Duty, as the greateſt Provocation to more Purity, that there is ſo conſtant Readineſs of Pardon in that Blood.

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SERMON XVI.

1 John i. 8. *If we ſay that we have no Sin, we deceive our ſelves, and the Truth is not in us.*

THE Night is far ſpent, the Day is at Hand, Rom. xiii. 12. This Life is but as Night, even to the Godly: There is ſome Light in it, ſome Star-light, but it is mixt with much Darkneſs of Ignorance and Sin; and ſo it will be, till the *Sun ariſe*, and the Morning of their Tranſlation to Heaven come: But though it be called Night in one Senſe, in Regard of that perfect glorious perpetual Day in Heaven; yet they are called *the Children of Light*, and *of the Day*, and are ſaid *to walk in the Light*, and are exhorted to *walk honeſtly as in the Day*; becauſe though there be a Mixture of Darkneſs in them, of Weakneſs in their Judgments, and Impurity in their Affections, yet they are *nati ad majora*, born to greater Things, and aſpiring to that perfect Day: There is ſo much Light, as to diſcern theſe Night-monſters, their own Corruptions, and Satan's Temptations, to fight continually againſt them: They are about this noble Work, the purifying themſelves from Sin and Darkneſs; ſo that they ly in the Middle, between the Light of Angels and glorified Spirits, that hath no Darkneſs in it, and the Midnight of the reſt of the World, who are buried in Darkneſs and Wickedneſs, and ly *intombed in it*, as the Word is, 1 *John* v. 19. The whole World κεῖται, lieth in Wickedneſs. *But we know that we are of God*: Therefore the Apoſtle ſubjoins here very ſeaſonably a Caution, or Correction of that which was ſpoken, about *the walking in the Light, and Fellowſhip with God*; which Words ſound out ſome Perfection, and, to our ſelf-flattering Minds, might poſſibly ſuggeſt ſome too high Opinion of ourſelves. If we, even we that have Fellowſhip with *God*, even I the Apoſtle, and you believing Chriſtians; if we ſay, we have no Sin, no Darkneſs in us, *we do but deceive our ſelves, and deny the Truth.* But who will ſay that I have no Sin? *Solomon* gives a Challenge to all the World, *Prov.* xx. 9. *Who can ſay, I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin?* And indeed, there is no Man ſo far a Stranger to himſelf; but if he in Sobriety and Calmneſs retire into his own Heart, the very Evidence of the Impurity of it, will extort this Confeſſion from him. As it uſeth to be ſaid of an Atheiſt, he feels *that divine Majeſty*, within in his ſecret Thoughts and Conſcience, which he denyeth with his Mouth, and he is often forced to tremble at the Remembrance of him whom he will not confeſs; ſo if there be any

any so far bewitched and inchanted into so gross and impudent a Delusion, as to assert his own Perfection and Vacancy from Sin, and Freedom from Obligation to any divine Command; (as this Time is fruitful of such Monsters) yet I dare be bold to say, that in the secret and quiet Reflections on themselves, they find that which they will not confess: Inwardly they feel what outwardly they deny, and cannot but some Time or other be filled with Horror and Anguish in their Consciences, by that inwardly witnessing and checking Principle, when God shall give it Liberty to exerce its Power over them. The End of such will be, as of professed Atheists; they pretend the securest Contempt, and fearlessest Misregard of God; but then, when he awakes to Judgment, or declares himself in some Thing extraordinary, they are subject to the most panick Fears and Terrors, because then there is a Party armed within against them, which they had disarmed in Security, and kept in Chains: So, whensoever such Men, of such high Pretensions, and sublime Professions, who love to speak nothing but Mysteries, and presume to such glorious Discoveries of new Lights of spiritual Mysteries; when these, I say, have flattered themselves for a Season, in the monstruous exorbitant Conceit of their own Perfection, and Immunity from Sin, and, it may be, deceived some others too; when they have lived some Time in this golden Dream of Innocency; the Time will come, either when the mighty Hand of *God* is on them here, or when they must enter Eternity, that they shall awake, and find all their Iniquities in Battle array, mustered by the Lord of Hosts, in their Conscience against themselves; and then they shall be the rarest Examples of Fear, Terror and Unbelief, who pretended to the greatest Confidence, Clearness and Innocency. My Beloved, let us establish this as an infallible Rule, to discern the Spirits by, and to know what Religion is, if it tend to glorifie *God*, and abase Man, to make him more humble, as well as holy; if it give the true and perfect Discovery of *God* to Man, and of Man to himself, *that is true Religion and undefiled*: But away with these sublime Speculations, these winged and airy Mysteries, those Pretensions to high Discoveries and new Lights, if they do not increase that good old Light of *humble walking with thy God*, &c. if they tend to the losing of the Obligation of divine Commands off thee; if they ravish Man so high, that he seeth not himself any more to be a poor miserable and darkned Creature, certainly, that is no Fellowship with the pure Light, which is not continually the Discovery and further Manifestation of more Sin and Darkness in us: For, what is a Man's Light in the dark Night of this Life? but the cleerest Light of that Darkness that is in Man; and his Holiness, What is it? but the abhoring of himself for that. It is true, something further is attained than the knowing of this; but it is always so far short of that original Pattern, that the best Way of expressing our Conformity to it, is by how much we apprehend our Distance and Deformity from it.

But, my Beloved, this is not all that is here meant, nor must we take it so grossly, as if this did only check the open Professors of a sinless, spotless Sanctity; nay certainly, there is another Way of saying this, than by the Tongue, and many other Ways of self-deceiving, than that gross one, many more universal and more dangerous, because less discernable. There is something of this, that even true Believers

lievers may fall into, and there is something of it more common to the Generality of professed Christians.

Among Believers in Christ, there is much Difference in self-judging; extreme Contrarieties, both between diverse Persons, and in one and the same, at diverse Times. You know that some are kept in the open View of their own Sins and Infirmities, and while they aim at Holiness, they are wholly disabled to that worthy Endeavour, by their Discouragements, arising from the Apprehension of their own Weakness, and infinite Shortcoming. Now to elevate and strengthen such Spirits, that Word was seasonably cast in, *And the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all Sin:* For it properly belongs to the Comfort of such fainting Souls; and it is all one, as if he had said, Up, and be doing, and the Blood of *Christ* shall cleanse your evil Doings. He goeth not about to perswade them to have better Thoughts of themselves, or lower Apprehensions of their Sins, but only to have higher and more suitable Thoughts of *Christ*, and the Virtue of his Blood; And this is the only Cure, not to abate from that low Esteem of ourselves, but to add to the Esteem, and grow in the lively Apprehension of *Christ*. I would not counsel you to think yourselves better, but to think better of him, that all your Confidence may arise from him.

Now there are others, and it may be that same Person at another Time, (for the Wind of Temptation winds about, and is sometimes in one Corner, sometimes in another; our Adversary useth many Stratagems, and will seem to flee before us, in yielding us the Victory over our Unbelief, that he may in his Flight return, and throw some other Dart upon us unawares,) when they have attained any Fervency of Desires, and Height of Design after Holiness, and walking with God, and this is seconded with any lively Endeavours, and this confirmed and strengthned with these Presences of *God*, and Accesses into the Soul, that fills it with some Sweetness; then, I say, they are ready to apprehend too highly of themselves, as if they had attained, and to look below upon others with some Disdain; then there is not that present Discovery of themselves, that may intermingle humble Mourning with it, but a Kind of unequal measuring their Attainments by their Desires, which in all true Christians are exceedingly mounted above themselves. Now indeed, this is in Effect, and really to say, *we have no Sin.* Herein is a Delusion, a self-deceiving Fancy, that begets too much self-pleasing. Let us know where our Stance is, infinitely below either our Duty, or our Desire; and re-mind this often, that we may not be in Hazard to be drunk with Self-love, and Self-deceit in this Particular. Besides, are there not many Christians, that having been once illuminated, and had some serious Exercises in their Souls, both of Sorrow for Sin, and Fear of Wrath, and Comfort by the Gospel; and being accustomed to some Discharge of religious Duties in private and publick, they sit down here, and hath not mind of further Progress; they think if they keep that Stance they are well, and so have few Designs or Endeavours after more Communion with *God*, or Purification from Sin. Now this makes them degenerate to Formality, they wither and become barren, and are exposed by this to many Temptations which overcome them. But, my Beloved, is not this really and indeed to say, *we have no Sin?* Do not your walking,

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and the Posture of your Spirits import so much, as if you had no Sin to wrestle with, no more Holiness to aspire unto, as if ye had no further Race to run to obtain the Crown. Do not deceive yourselves, by thinking it sufficient to have so much Honesty and Grace, as in your Opinion may put you over the black Line in Ir-regeneration, as if ye would seek no more than is precisely necessary for Salvation? Truly, if ye be so minded, you give a miserable Hint, that you are not yet translated from the black Side of Darkness. I do not say that all such are unconverted; but, if you continue thus, without stirring up yourselves to a daily Conversion and Renovation, ye do too much to blot out the Evidence of your Conversion, and at length it may prove to some a self-destroying Deceit, when they shall find themselves not past over that Line that passeth between Heaven and Hell, which they were studying to find out, only that they might pass so far over it, as might keep their Soul and Hell asunder, without earnest Desires of Advancement towards Heaven in Conformity to *God*. Now for the Generality of professed Christians, tho' there be none hath that general Confession of Sin oftner and more readily in their Mouths; yet, I suppose, it is easy to demonstrate that there is much of this Self-deceit in them, which declares that *the Truth is not in them*. You know both God and Man constructs of Men by their Ways, not by their Words; and the Lord may interprete your Hearts by their Dispositions, and raise a Collection of Atheism out of all together; *the Fool hath said in his Heart*, &c. Even so say I, many pretended Christians, say in their Heart, *We have no Sin*. How prove ye that? I seek nothing else to prove it, than your own ordinary Clearings and Exculings of yourselves; ye confess ye are Sinners, and break all the Commands; yet come to Particulars, and I know not one of twenty that will cordially or seriously take with almost any Sin; yea, what you have granted in a General, you retract and deny it in all the Particulars; which declares both that, even that which you seem to know, you are altogether Strangers to the real Truth of it, and that you are over-blinded with a fond Love of yourselves. I know not to what Purposes your general Acknowledgments are, but to be a Mask or Shadow to deceive you, to be a Blind to hide you from yourseves; since the most Part of you, whensoever challenged of any particular Sin, or Inclination to it, justify yourselves; and whenever ye are put to a particular Confession of your Sins, you have all wrapt up in such a Bundle of Confusion, that you never know one Sin by another. Certainly, *ye deceive yourselves, and the Truth is not in you.*

Let me add moreover another Instance; do you not so live, and walk in Sin so securely, so impenitently, as if you had no Sin, no Fear of God's Warth? Do not the most Part contentedly and peaceably live in so much Ignorance of the Gospel, as if they had no Need of Christ? and so by Consequence, as if they had no Sin: For if you did believe in the Heart, and indeed consider, that your Hearts are Sinks of Iniquity and Impurity, would you not think it necessary to apply to the Physician? And would you not then labour to know the Physician, and the Gospel, which is the Report of him? Certainly, in asmuch as you take no Pains for the Knowledge of a *Saviour*, you declare that you know not your Sin; for if ye know the one, ye could

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not but search to know the other. What is the Voice of most Mens walking? Doth it not proclaim this, that they think there is no Sin in them? For if there be Sin in you, is there not a Curse upon you, and Wrath before you? And if you did really see the one, would you not see the other? And did you see it, would it not drive you to more serious Thoughts? Would it not affright you? Would it not cause you often to retire in to yourselves, and from the World? And above all, how precious would the Tidings of a *Saviour* be, that now are common and contemptible? Would you not every Day wash in that Blood? Would the Current of Repentance dry? But, forasmuch as you are not exercised this Way, give no Thoughts nor Time for Reconcilement with *God*, walk without any Fear of Hell, and without any earnest and serious Study of changing your Ways, and purifying your Hearts; in a Word, though ye confess Sin in the general, yet your whole Carriage of Heart and Ways declare so much, that you think it not a Thing much to be feared, or that a Man should busie himself about it; that a Man may live in it, and be well here, and hereafter. And is not this to deny the very Nature of Sin, and to deceive your own Souls?

SERMON XVII.

1 John. i. 9. *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us our Sins,* &c.

THE Current of Sin dries not up, but runs constantly while we are in this Life. It is true, it is much diminished in a Believer, and it runs not in such an universal Flood over the whole Man, as it is in the Unbeliever; yet there is a living Spring of Sin within the Godly, which is never ceasing to drop out Pollution and Defilement, either upon their whole Persons, or at least, to intermingle it with their good Actions. Now, there is no Comfort for this, but this one, that there is another Stream of *the Blood of Jesus Christ*, that never dries up, is never exhausted, never emptied, but flows as full and as free, as clear and fresh as ever it did; And this is so great, and of so great Vertue, that it is able to swallow up the Stream of our Pollutions, and to take away the daily Filth of a Believer's Conversation. Now indeed, though the Blood of *Jesus Christ* be of such infinite Vertue and Efficacy, that it were sufficient to cleanse the Sins of the whole World, it would be an Over-ransom for the Souls of all Men, there is so much Worth in it: That Flood of Guiltiness that hath drowned the World, this Flood of *Christ's Blood* that gushed out of his Side, is of sufficient Vertue to cleanse it perfectly away; notwithstanding of this absolute

universal Sufficiency, yet certain it is, that it is not actually applyed unto the cleansing of all Mens Sins, but yet the most Part of Men are still drowned in the Deluge of their own Wickedness, and lie intomb'd in Darkness; therefore it concerns us to know the Way of the Application of this Blood, to the Cleansing of Sinners; and this Way is set down in this Verse, *If we confess our Sins, he is just to forgive.* There was something hinted at obscurely in the preceeding Verse; for when he shews, that such as say they have no Sin, who either by the Disposition of their Hearts, or Carriage of their Ways, do by Interpretation say, they want Sin, *Such deceive themselves, and the Truth is not in them*, and so they have no Benefit of *that Blood that cleanseth from all Sin.* And so it is imported here, that tho' the Blood of *Christ* be fully sufficient to cleanse all Sin, yet it is not so prostituted and basely spent upon Sinners, as to be bestowed upon them who do not know their Sins, and never enter into any serious and impartial Examination of themselves. Such, though they say they are Sinners, yet never descending into themselves to search their own Hearts and Ways; and so never coming to the particular Knowledge of their Sins, and Feeling of them, they cannot at all make Application of that Blood to their own Consciences, either seriously or pertinently: Though the River and Fountain of *Christ's Blood* run by them, in the daily preaching of the Gospel, yet being destitute of this daily Self-inspection, and Self-knowledge, being altogether ignorant of themselves, they can no more wash here, than these who never heard of this Blood, they being Strangers to themselves, sets them at as great Distance and Estrangement from the Blood of *Christ*, as if they were wholly Strangers to the very preaching of this Blood. Let us then have this first established in our Hearts, that there is no cleansing from Sin, without the Knowledge of Sin; and there is no true Knowledge of Sin, without a serious Soul-examination of Sin, these are knit together in their own Nature; For how should our Sins be pardoned, when we know nothing of them but in a confused Generality, that can never affect the Heart? How should our Sins not be opened and discovered before the Holiness of *God*, when they are always covered unto us, and hid from our Eyes? Certainly, the Righteousness and Wisdom of *God* requires, that such a monstruous Thing, so great an Enemy of *God's* Holiness, be not wholly past away in Silence without Observation. If we do not observe, he will; for to what Purpose should Pardon be so lavished upon them who are not capable to know what Favour and Grace is in it? And certainly, that none can know, without the feeling Knowledge of the Height and Hainousness of Sin. Now, I pray you, how should ye know your Sins, when ye will not allow any Time for the searching of yourselves? Many cannot say that ever they did purposely and deliberately withdraw from the World, and separate their Spirits for this Business of Self-examination; and therefore you remain perpetually Strangers to yourselves, and as great Strangers to the Power and Vertue of this Blood.

Now in this *Verse*, he declares it plainly, in what Way and Method Sin is pardoned by this Blood. By the former *Verse*, we have so much, that it is necessary we must search and try our Ways, that so we may truly know our Sins, and charge them upon ourselves; and here it

it is superadded, that we must confess them to him: And the Promise is annexed, *he is just and faithful to forgive.* Now this Confession of Sin is very fitly subjoined, both to that which he declared of that great End of the Gospel, *Communion with God*, and that which was immediately holden forth of the remaining Vertue of *Christ*'s Blood; for might a poor Soul say, How shall I come to partake of that blessed Society? I am a Sinner, and so an Enemy to God, How shall this Enmity be removed? And if the Answer be made, *The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all Sin*, and so maketh Access for a Sinner to enter into this Society; yet a Question remains, And how shall the Vertue of that be applied to my Soul? It is sufficient I know for all, but what Way may I have the particular Benefit of it? Here it is fully satisfied, *If we confess our Sins, God is just and faithful to forgive.* He lyeth under some Obligation to pardon us. Now, many of you may think, if this be the Way, and these be the Terms of Pardon, then we hope all shall be pardoned; for if there be no more but to confess our Sins, Who will not willingly do that, and who doth not daily do it? As one said, if it be sufficient to accuse, none will be Innocent: *Si accusasse sufficiat, nemo innocens erit*; so you may think, *Si confiteri sufficiat, nemo reus erit.* If it be sufficient to confess, none will be guilty. But, my Beloved, let us not deceive ourselves with the present first Apprehensions of Words that occur in this Kind; it is true, as ye take Confession, there is nothing more ordinary; but, if it be taken in the true Scripture-meaning, and in the realest Sense, I fear there is nothing among Men so extraordinary: I desire you may but consider how you take this Word in your Dealings with Men, you take it certainly in a more real Sense than you use it in Religion. If any had done you some great Wrong or Injury, suppose your Servant, or Inferior, What Acknowledgment would you take from him of his Wrong? If he confessed his Wrong only in general ambiguous Terms, if he did it either lightly, or without any Sense or Sorrow for it, if he did withal excuse and extenuate his Fault, and never ceased, notwithstanding of all his Confession, to do the like Wrong when Occasion offered, would you not think this a Mockery? And would it not rather provoke you, than pacify you? Now, when ye take Words in so real and deep Significations in your own Matters, what gross Delusion is it, that you take them in the slightest and emptiest Meaning in these Things that relate to *God?* And I am sure the most Part of Mens Confessions are of that Nature which I have described, general, ignorant, senseless, without any particular View, or lively Feeling of the Vileness and Loathsomness of Sin, and their own Hearts; whenever it comes to Particulars, there is a Multitude of Extenuations and Pretences, to hide and cover the Sin; and generally Men never cease the more from sinning, it puts no Stop in their running, *as the Horse to the Battle*: To-day they confess it, and To-morrow they act it again with as much Delight as before. Now, of this I may say, *offer it to thy Governor, and see if he will be pleased with thee*, or let another offer such an Acknowledgment of Wrong to thee, and see if it will please thee; and if it will not, Why deceive ye yourselves with the outward Visage of Things, in these Matters that are of greatest Soul-concernment? Should

they not be taken in the moſt-inward and ſubſtantial Signification that can be? leaſt you be deceived with falſe Appearances; and while you give but a Shadow of Confeſſion, you receive but a Shadow of Forgiveneſs, ſuch a Thing as will not carry and bear you out before *God's Tribunal*: Therefore we muſt needs take it thus, that Confeſſion of Sin is the Work of the whole Man, and not of the Mouth only. It is the Heart, Tongue, and all that is in a Man, joining together to the Acknowledgment of Sin, and *God's* Righteouſneſs; therefore it includes in it, not only a particular Knowledge of our Offences, and the Temper of our Hearts, but a ſenſible Feeling of the Loathſomneſs and Hainouſneſs of theſe: And this is the Spring that it flows from, a broken and contrite Heart, that is bruiſed under the Apprehenſions of the Weight of Guiltineſs, and is imbittered with the Senſe of the Gall of Iniquity, that poſſeſſeth the Heart. Here then is the great Moment of Confeſſion and Repentance, What is the inward Fountain it flows from? If the Heart be brought to the diſtinct and clear View of itſelf, and to diſcern the Iniquity and Plague of it, and ſo to fall down under the mighty Hand of God, and before his Tribunal, as guilty, as not being able or willing to open his Mouth in an Excuſe or Extenuation of Sin, or to plead for Compaſſion from any Conſideration in himſelf; a Soul thus placed between Iniquities ſet in Order, and Battle array on the one Hand, and the holy Law and Righteouſneſs of God on the other Hand; the Filthineſs of the one, filling with Shame and Confuſion, and the Dreadfulneſs of the other, cauſing Fear and Trembling: In this Poſture, I ſay, for a Soul to come and fall at the *Judge's* Feet, and make Supplication to him in his *Son Chriſt*; thus being inwardly preſſed to vent and pour out our Hearts before him, in the Confeſſion of our Sins, and to flee unto the *City of Refuge, his Mercy and Grace* that is declared in *Jeſus Chriſt*; this, I ſay, is indeed to confeſs our Sins: For then Confeſſion is an Exoneration and disburdening of the Heart, it flows from the Abundance of the inward Contrition of it; and as this muſt be the Spring of it, ſo there is another Stream that will certainly flow from the ingenious Confeſſion of our Sins, that is, a forſaking of them: Theſe are the two Streams that flow from one Head and Spring, the inward Fountain of Contrition and Sorrow for Sin; there is a holy Indignation kindled in the Heart againſt Sin, and an Engagement upon ſuch a Soul, as indeed flees to Mercy, to renounce Sin; and here is the complete Nature of true Repentance. *Solomon* joins them, *He that confeſſeth and forſaketh ſhall have Mercy*, Prov. xxviii. 13. And this is oppoſed to covering of Sins, *For he that covereth his Sins ſhall not proſper*. And what is that to cover his Sin? Confeſſing them in a general confuſed Notion, without any diſtinct Knowledge, or Senſe of particular Guiltineſs, that is a covering of Sins, or confeſſing Sin, and not forſaking of it, that is a covering of Sin; for, to act Sin over again, with continual freſh Delight and Vigour, is to retract our Confeſſions, and to bury and cover them with the Mould of new Tranſgreſſions. Now, take this unto you, *you ſhall not proſper*, what can be ſaid worſe? for you are but in a Dream of Happineſs, and you ſhall one Day be ſhaken out of it, and that fancied Pardon ſhall evaniſh, and then your Sins that you covered in this Manner, ſhall be diſcovered before the Judge of the World, and *you ſhall not ſtand in Judgment.*

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SERMON XVIII.

1 John i. 9. *If we confeſs our Sins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive our Sins*, &c.

THE Freedom of God's Grace, and the Greatneſs of his Wiſdom, ſhines forth moſt brightly in the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and both of them beautify and illuſtrate one another. That there is firſt, an Expiation of Sin by the Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt*, that a Way is laid down of reconciling the World, and that *by the Blood of the Croſs*, that Peace is purchaſed, and ſo preached unto Sinners, as a Thing already procured, and now only to be applied unto the Soul by Faith; herein doth the ineſtimable Riches of the Grace of *God* expoſe itſelf to the View of Angels and Men. That the great Work of Redemption is ended, ere it come to us; and there remains nothing, but to publiſh it to the World, and invite us to come and receive it, and have a Part in it; all is ready, the Feaſt prepared, and ſet on the Table, and there wants nothing but Gueſts to eat of it, and theſe are daily called by the Goſpel to come to this Table, which the Wiſdom of the Father hath prepared for us, without either our Knowedge or Concurrence. Beſides, the very Terms of propoſing the Goſpel, ſpeak forth abſolute Freedom; What can be more free and eaſy than this? *Chriſt is ſent to die for Sinners, and to redeem them from the Curſe, only receive him, come to him, and believe in him.* He hath undertaken to ſave, only do you conſent too, and give up your Name to him; ye have nothing to do to ſatisfy Juſtice, or purchaſe Salvation, only be willing that he do it for you, or rather acquieſce to that he hath done already, and reſt on it. But how ſhall our Sins be pardoned, and Juſtice ſatisfied? Only confeſs your Sins to him, and ye are forgiven, not for your Confeſſion, but for *Chriſt*; only acknowledge thine Iniquity and Wrongs, and he hath taken another Way to repair his Juſtice, than by thy Deſtruction and Condemnation; he is ſo far from extending his Juſtice againſt thee, that he is rather engaged upon his Faithfulneſs and Juſtice to forgive thee, becauſe of his Promiſe.

Yet, ye would not conceive ſo of this Manner of Propoſal of Forgiveneſs and Salvation, as if the requiring of ſuch a Thing as Repentance in thee, were any Derogation from the Abſoluteneſs of his Grace; for it is not required, either to the Point of Satisfaction to *God's Juſtice*, and Expiation of Sin, for that is done already upon the Croſs. *Chriſt* was not offered to ſave Sinners, he was not ſent upon the previous Condition of their

their Repentance: Nay, *while we were yet Enemies, Christ died for the ungodly*; so that to the Business of our Redemption, there was no Concurrence upon our Part, nor Influence upon it by our Carriage; for he considered us as Sinners, and miserable, and so saved us. And now, to the actual Application of these preventing Mercies, 'tis true, it is needful in the wise and reasonable Dispensation of *God*, that Sinners be brought to the Knowledge and sensible Acknowledgment of their Sin and Misery, and so be upon rational Inducements of Misery within, and Mercy without, of Self-indigency, and *Christ*'s Sufficiency, be drawn into *Jesus Christ*, and so to a partaking of these purchased Privileges of Forgiveness of Sin, Peace with God, *&c.* I say, all this is so far from diminishing a Jot of that absolute Freedom of Grace, that it rather jointly proclaims the Riches of Grace and Wisdom both, that Repentance should be given to an impenitent Sinner, and Faith freely bestowed on an unbelieving Sinner; and withal, that Remission and Salvation, together with Faith and Repentance, should be brought to us by his Death, while we were yet Enemies; this doth declare the most unparalell'd Bounty and Grace, that the Heart of Man can imagine; and withal, that Remission of Sins is joined to Confession, and Salvation to Faith, herein the Wisdom of God triumphs; for, what Way is it possible to declare that Freedom of Grace, to the sensible Conviction of a Sinner, and so to demonstrate it to all Mens Consciences, except by making them return within, to see their own absolute Unworthiness, Vileness, and Incorrespondency to such Mercies, and so drawing an Acknowledgment of his Grace, from the Mouths and Consciences of all? How shall a Soul know that rich superabundant Grace, if he know not the Abundance of his Sins? How shall he profess the one, except he withal confess the other? Let us imagine an impenitent Sinner, continuing in Rebellion, pardoned and forgiven: And is there any Thing more contrary to common Sense and Reason, to be in God's Favour, and yet not accepting that Favour; to be a Friend, and yet an Enemy; to have Sins forgiven, and yet not known not confessed; these, I say, sound some plain Dissonancy and Discord to our very first Apprehensions. Certainly, this is the Way to declare the Glory of his Grace, in the hiding and covering of Sin, even to discover Sin to the Sinner; else, if God should hide Sin, and it be hid withal from the Conscience, both thy Sin and God's Grace should be hid and covered, neither the one nor the other would appear. Take it thus then, the Confession of Sin is not for this End, to have any casual Influence upon thy Remission, or to procure any more Favour and Liking with God; but it is simply this, the Confession of Sin is the most accommodate Way of the Profession and Publication of the Grace of God, in the forgiving of Sins; Faith and Repentance are not set down as Conditions prerequired on thy Part, that may procure Salvation or Forgiveness, but they are inseparably annexed unto Salvation and Forgiveness, to the end that they may manifest to our sensible Conviction, that Grace, and Freedom of Grace, which shines in Forgiveness and Salvation.

He is just and faithful, &c. Herein is the Wonder of the Grace of God increased, that when we are under an Obligation to infinite Punishment for Sin, and bound guilty before his Justice, that the

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most great and potent Lord, who can easily rid himself of all his Enemies, and do all his Pleasure in Heaven and Earth, should come under an Obligation to Man to forgive him his Sins. A strange Exchange, *Man* is standing bound by the Cords of his own Sins over the Justice of *God*, he is under that insoluble Tye of Guiltiness; *God* in the mean Time is free and loosed from the Obligation of the first Covenant, that is, his Promise of giving Life to Man; we have loosed him from that voluntary Engagement, and are bound under a Curse; and yet, behold the Permutation of Grace, *Man* is loosed from Sin to which he was bound, and *God* is bound to forgive Sin, to which he was not bound. He enters in a new and voluntary Engagement by his Promise, and gives Right to poor Creatures to sue and seek Forgiveness of him, according to his Faithfulness: Yet in this Plea, as it becomes us to use Confidence, because he gives us Ground by his Promises, so we should season it with Humility, knowing how infinitely free and voluntary his Condescension is, being always mindful, that he may in Righteousness exact Punishment of us for Sin, rather than we seek Forgiveness from him; and yet seek it we ought, because he hath engaged his faithful Promise; which Opportunity to neglect, and not to improve, either, though Fear or Security, were as high Contempt and Disobedience to him, as these Sins by which we offend him.

Certainly, the very *Name of God* revealed to us, or known by Nature's Light, those general Characters of his Name, *Mercy* and *Goodness*, *Power* and *Greatness*, might suffice to so much, as to make us in the Apprehensions of our own Guiltiness and Provocations of his Holiness, to look no other Way, than to his own merciful and gracious Nature: Suppose we had nothing of a Promise from him, by which he is bound; yet, as the very Apprehension of the general Goodness, and unlimited Bounty, and original Happiness that is in *God*, ought naturally to draw the Creature towards him in all its Wants, to supplicate his Fulness, that can supply all Necessities, without lessening his own Abundance; even so, if we did only apprehend that *God* is the Fountain of Mercy, and that he is infinitely above us and our Injuries, and that all our Being and Well-being eternally consists in his sole Favour; this, I say, alone considered, might draw us to a pouring out our Hearts before him, in the Acknowledgment of our Guiltiness, and casting ourselves upon his Mercy (as the Term is used in War) when there is no Quarter promised, and no Capitulation made: It is the last Refuge of a desperate Sinner, to render unto *God* upon Mercy, to resign himself to his free Disposal; since I cannot but perish (may a Soul say) without him, there is no Way of escaping from his Wrath, I will rather venture, and *go in to the King*, *and if I perish I perish*: There is more Hope in this Way to come to him, than to flee from him, perhaps he may shew an Act of absolute sovereign Goodness, and be as glorious in passing by an Offence, as just in punishing it: Do I not see in Man, (in whom the Divine Majesty hath imprinted some Characters of Conscience and Honesty) that it is more generous and noble to forgive, than to revenge? And do I not see generally among Men, Clemency and Compassion is commended above Severity and Rigour, though just, especially towards these who are inferior, weak,

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unable to reſiſt, and have yielded themſelves to Mercy. Now, ſhall I not much more apprehend that of *God*, which I admire in a ſinful Man? Shall not that be moſt perfect in him, which is but a maimed and broken Piece of his Image in loſt Man? Certainly, it is the Glory of *God* to conceal an Offence, as well as to publiſh it, and he can ſhew as much Greatneſs and Majeſty in Mercy, as in Juſtice; therefore I will wholly commit my ſelf to him. I think a Man ought to reaſon ſo, from the very natural Knowlege he hath of *God*; but when ye have not only his Name and Nature publiſhed, but his Word and Promiſe ſo often proclaimed, himſelf come under ſome Tye to receive and accept graciouſly all Sinners that fly in under the Shadow of his Wings of Mercy; then O, with how much Perſwaſion and Boldneſs ſhould we come to him, and lay open our Sins before him, who not only may pardon them, and not only is likely to do it, ſeeing he hath a gracious Nature, but certainly will pardon them, cannot but do it, becauſe his Faithfulneſs requireth it. Certainly, he hath ſuperadded his Word to his Name, his Promiſe to his Nature, to confirm our Faith, and give us ample Ground of ſtrong Conſolation.

There is another more ſuitable Notion about the Juſtice of *God*, in forgiving Sin; it hath ſome Truth in the Thing itſelf, but whether it be imported here, I dare not certainly affirm. Some take his *Faithfulneſs* in Relation to his Word of Promiſe, and his *Juſtice* in Relation to the Price and Ranſom payed by *Chriſt*; importing as much as this, what ever Sinner comes to *God in Chriſt*, confeſſing their own Guiltineſs in Sincerity, and ſupplicating for Pardon, he cannot in Juſtice refuſe to give it out unto them, ſince he hath taken complete Satisfaction of *Chriſt*. When a Sinner ſeeks a Diſcharge of all Sin, by Virtue of that Blood, the *Lord* is bound by his own Juſtice to give it out, and to write a free Remiſſion to them; ſince he is fully paid, he cannot but diſcharge us, and cancel our Bonds. So then a poor Sinner that deſires Mercy, and would forſake Sin, hath a twofold Ground to ſuit this Forgiveneſs upon *Chriſt's Blood*, and *God's own Word, Chriſt's Purchaſe and Payment*, and *the Father's Promiſe, he is juſt and Righteous*, and therefore he cannot deny the one, nor yet take two Satisfactions, two Payments for one Debt; and *he is faithful*, ſo he cannot but ſtand to the other, that is his Promiſe, and thus is Forgiveneſs aſcertained and aſſured unto the confeſſing Sinner. If any would take this in Relation to Confeſſion, as if it reflected upon that which preceeded; and the Meaning ſhould be, if any Man confeſs his Sin, he is juſt to requite Confeſſion with Remiſſion, he cannot in Righteouſneſs deny one that deſerves it ſo well, he is juſt to return ſome ſuitable Recompence, to ſuch a humble Confeſſion: This Senſe were a perverting of the whole Goſpel, and would overturn the Foundations of Grace; for, there is no Connection between our Confeſſion and his Remiſſion, but that which the abſolute good Pleaſure of his Will hath made; beſides, that Repentance is as free Grace given from the exalted Prince, as Remiſſion of Sins is.

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SERMON XIX.

1 John i. 9, 10. *If we confeſs our Sins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs.*
If we ſay that we have not ſinned, we make him a Liar, &c.

AND who will not confeſs their Sin, ſay you? Who doth not confeſs Sins daily, and therefore, who is not forgiven and pardoned? But ſtay, and conſider the Matter again, take not this upon your firſt light Apprehenſions, which in Religion are commonly empty, vain and ſuperficial; but ſearch the Scriptures, and your own Hearts, that ye may know what Confeſſion means. It may be ſaid of that external Cuſtom of Confeſſion, that many of you have, that the Lord hath not required it, *Sacrifices and burnt Offerings thou wouldeſt not*, ſome external Submiſſions and Confeſſions, which ye take for Compenſation for Sins and Offences againſt God, theſe, I ſay, are but Abomination to the Lord; *but a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe*, Pſal. li. 16, 17. And *lo, I come to do thy Will, I delight in it*, Pſal. xl. 7, 8. When external Profeſſions and Confeſſions are ſeparated from the internal Contrition of the Heart, and godly Sorrow for Sin, and when both internal Contrition, and external Profeſſion and Confeſſion are divided from Conformity, or Study of Conformity to God's Will, then they are in no better Acceptance with God, than theſe external Sacrifices which God rejected, though he had required them, becauſe they were disjoyned from the true Life of them, and ſpiritual Meaning, that is, Faith in a Mediator, and Love to Obedience. If Confeſſion flow not from ſome Contrition of Heart, if there be not ſome inward Spring of this Kind, the Heart opened and unfolding its very Inſide before God, breaking in Pieces, which makes both Pain or Senſe, and likewiſe gives the clearer View of the inward Parts of the Heart; and if it be not joined with Affection to God's Will and Law, earneſt Love to new Obedience, it is but a vain, empty and counterfeit Confeſſion, that denies it ſelf. I ſuppoſe, a Man that confeſſes Sin which he feels nor, or forſakes not, in ſo doing, he declares that he knows not the Nature of Sin; he may know ſuch an Action, that it is commonly called Sin, and it may be, is aſhamed and cenſured among Men, and therefore he confeſſeth it; but while

he confeſſeth it without Senſe or Feeling, he declares that he takes it not up as Sin, hath not found the Vileneſs and Loathſomneſs of the Nature of it, nor beheld it as it is a Violation of the *moſt high Lord's Laws*, and a Provocation of his glorious Holineſs. Did a Soul view it thus, as it is repreſented in *God's* Sight, as it diſhonours that *glorious Majeſty*, and hath manifeſt Rebellion in it againſt him, and as it defiles and pollutes our Spirits; he could not I ſay, thus look upon it, but he would find ſome inward Soul-abhorrence and Diſplicence at it, and himſelf too. How monſtruous would it make him in his own Sight? It could not but affect the Heart, and humble it in Secret before *God*; whereas your forced and ſtrained Confeſſions made in publick, they are meerly taken on then, and proceed from no inward Principle; there is no Shadow of any Soul-humiliation in Secret, but as ſome uſe to put on Sackcloath when they come to make that Profeſſion, and put it off when they go out; ſo you put on a Habit of Confeſſion in publick, and put it off you when you go out of the Congregation. To ly mourning before the *Lord*, in your ſecret Retirements, that you are Strangers to. But I wonder how you ſhould thus mock *God*, that you will not be as ſerious and real in confeſſing, as in ſinning? Will you ſin with the whole Man, and confeſs only with the Mouth? Will ye act Sin with Delight, and not confeſs it with a true Sorrow that indeed affects the Heart? Now, do you honour God by confeſſing, when the Manner of it declares, that you feel not the Bitterneſs of Sin, and conceive not the Holineſs and Righteouſneſs of God, whom you have to do withal? Even ſo, when you confeſs Sin, which you do not forſake, you in ſo far declare that you know not Sin, what it is you confeſs, and ſo, that you have mocked him who will not be mocked; for, what a Mockery is it, to confeſs theſe Faults, which we have no ſolid effectual Purpoſe to reform? To vomit up your Sins by Confeſſion, that we may with more Deſire and Luſt lick up the Vomit again, and to pretend to waſh, for nothing elſe, but to return to the Puddle and defile again. My Brethren, *Out of the ſame Fountain comes not bitter Water and ſweet*, James iii. 11. Since that which ordinarily proceeds from you, is bitter, unſavory to *God* and Man, carnal, earthly and ſenſual, your Ways are a diſplayed Banner againſt God's Will, then lay your Account, all your Profeſſions and Acknowledgments are of the ſame Nature, they are but a little more ſugared over, and their inward Nature is not changed, as unacceptable to God, as your Sins are.

I would give you ſome Characters out of the Text, to diſcover unto you the Vanity and Emptineſs of your ordinary Confeſſions. The Confeſſion of Sin muſt be *particular*, *univerſal*, *perpetual*, or *conſtant*; *particular*, I ſay, for there are many Thouſands who confeſs that they are Sinners, and yet do not at all confeſs their Sins: For, to confeſs Sins, is to confeſs their own real actual Guiltineſs, that which they indeed have committed, or are inclined to do. So the true and ſincere Confeſſion of a repenting People is expreſſed, 1 *Kings* viii. 38. *What Prayer or Supplication ſoever be made by any Man, which ſhall know the Plague of his own Heart, and ſpread forth his Hands, then hear thou in Heaven, and forgive every Man whoſe Heart thou knoweſt.* Now conſider

sider whether or not you be thus acquainted with your own Hearts and Ways, as to know your particular Plague and Predominant. Are you not rather wholly Strangers to yourselves, especially the Plague of your Hearts? There are few that keep so much as a Record or Register of their Actions done against God's Law, or their Neglects of his Will; and therefore, when you are particularly posed about your Sins, or the Challenge of Sin, you can speak nothing to that, but that you never knew one Sin by another; that is indeed, you never observed your Sins, you never knew any Sin, but contented your self with the Tradition you received that you were Sinners; but if any Man be used to reflect upon his own Ways, yet generally, the most Part of Men are altogether Strangers to their Hearts; if they know any Evil of themselves, it is at most, but something done, or undone, some Commission or Omission, but nothing of the inward Fountain of Sin is discovered. I beseech you then, do not deceive yourselves with this general Acknowledgment that you are Sinners, while in the mean Time your real particular Sins are hid from you, and you cannot choose but hide in a Generality from God. Certainly, you are far from Forgiveness, and that *Blessedness* of which *David* speaks, *Psal.* xxxii. for this belongs to the Man *that hideth not his Sins, in whose Heart is no Guile.* And this is the Plainness and Sincerity of the Heart, rightly to discern its own Plagues, and unfold them to him. *David*, no doubt, would at any Time have confessed that he was a Sinner, but mark how heavy the Wrath of God was on him for all that, because he came not to a plain, ingenuous and humble Acknowledgment of his particular Sins. *I confessed my Sin, and mine Iniquity I hid not.* While you confess only in general Terms, you confess others Sins rather than yours; but this is it, to descend into our own Hearts, and find out our just and true Accusation, our real Debt, to charge ourselves as narrowly as we can, that he may discharge us fully, and forgive us freely.

Next, I say, Confession must be *universal*, that is, of all Sin, without Partiality or Respect to any Sin. I doubt if a Man can truly repent of any Sin, except he in a Manner repent of all Sin, or truly forsake one Sin, except there be a Divorcement of the Heart from, and forsaking of all Sin; therefore the Apostle saith, *If we confess our Sins*, not *Sin* simply, but *Sins*, taking in all the Body and Collection of them; for it is opposed to that, *if we say we have no Sin*, &c. Then there lyes a Necessity upon us to confess what we have; we have all Sin, and so should confess all Sins. Now, my Meaning is not, that it is absolutely necessary that a Soul come to the particular Knowledge and Acknowledgment of all his Sins, whether of Ignorance, or Infirmity; nay, that is not possible, for *who can understand his Errors?* (saith *David*) *Cleanse thou me from secret Sins*, Psal. xix. 12. There are many Sins of Ignorance, that we know not to be Sins, and many Escapes of Infirmity, that we do not advert to, which otherwise we might know. Now, I do not impose that Burden on a Soul, to confess every individual Sin of that Kind; but this certainly must be, there must be such a Discovery of the Nature of Sin, and the Loathsomness of it in *God*'s Sight, and the hainous Guilt of it, as may abase and humble the Soul in his Presence; there must be some distinct-

er and clearer View of the Diſpoſitions and Luſts of the Heart, than Men attain generally unto; and withal, a Diſcovery of the holy and ſpiritual Meaning of *God's* Law, which may unfold a Multitude of Tranſgreſſions, that are hid from the World, and make Sin to abound in a Man's Sight and Senſe; (*for when the Law enters, Sin abounds*) and to cloſe up this, as there are many Sins now diſcovered unto ſuch a Soul, which lay hid before, *the Light having ſhined in upon the Darkneſs*, and above all, the deſperate Wickedneſs of the Heart is preſented; ſo there is no Sin known and diſcerned, but there is an equal impartial Sorrow for it, and Indignation againſt it. As a Believer *hath Reſpect to all God's Commands*, and loves to obey them, ſo the penitent Soul hath an impartial Hatred of all Sin, even the deareſt and moſt beloved Idol, and deſires unfeignedly to be rid of it. Hence your uſual publick Confeſſions of Sin, are wipt out of the Number of true and ſincere Confeſſions, becauſe you pretend to repent of one Sin, and in the mean Time, neither do ye know a Multitude of other Sins that prevail over you, nor do you mourn for them, nor forſake them. Nay, you do not examine yourſelves that Way, to find out the Temper of your Hearts, or Tenor and Courſe of your Ways. You pretend to repent for Drunkenneſs, or ſuch like, and yet you are ordinary Curſers, Swearers, Liars, Railers, Neglecters of Prayer, Prophaners of the Sabbath, and ſuch like, and theſe you do not withal mourn for: In ſum, he that mourns only for the Sin that Men cenſure, he knoweth and confeſſeth no Sin ſincerely; if you would indeed return unto God from ſome groſs Evils, you muſt be divorced in your Affections from all Sin.

Then this Confeſſion ſhould be *perpetuated* and *continued*, as long as we are in this Life, for that is imported by comparing this *Verſe* with theſe it ſtands between. *If we ſay we have no Sin*, if we ſay at any Time, while we are in this Life, if we imagine or dream of any ſuch Perfection here, *we lie*. Now, what ſhould we do then, ſince Sin is always lodging in our mortal Bodies, during this Time of neceſſary Abode beſide an ill Neighbour? What ſhould be our Exerciſe? even this, Confeſs your Sins, confeſs, I ſay, as long as you have them, draw out this the length of that: Be continually groaning to him under that Body of Death, and mourning under your daily Infirmities and Failings; that Stream of Corruption runs continually, let the Stream of your Contrition and Confeſſion run as unceſſantly; and there is another Stream of *Chriſt's Blood*, that runs conſtantly too to cleanſe you. Now, herein is the Diſcovery of the Vanity and Deceitfulneſs of many of your Confeſſions, publick and private; the Current of them ſoon dries up, there is no Perpetuity or Conſtancy in them, no daily humbling or abaſing yourſelves, but all that is, is by Fits and Starts, upon ſome tranſient Convictions, or outward Cenſures and Rebukes: And thus Men quickly cover and bury their Sins in Oblivion and Security, and forget what Manner of Perſons they were; they are not under a daily impartial Examination of their Ways, take Notice of nothing but ſome ſolemn and groſs Eſcapes, and theſe are but a ſhort Time under their View.

Now, let me apply a little to the Encouragement of poor Souls, who being inwardly burdened with the Weight of their own Guiltineſs, exoner themſelves by Confeſſion in his Boſom; as you have

have two Suits, and two Desires to him, one, that your Sins may be forgiven, another, that they may be subdued; so he hath two solemn Engagements and Tyes to satisfy you; one to forgive your Sins, and another to cleanse you from all Unrighteousness. The Soul that is truly penitent, is not only desirous of Pardon of Sin, that is not the chief or only Design of such a Soul in Application to *Christ*; but it is withal to be purified from Sin, and all Unrighteousness, and to have ungodly Lusts cleansed away: And herein is the great Probation of such an One's Reality, it will not suffice or satisfy such an One, to be assured of Delivery from Wrath and Condemnation, but he must likewise be redeemed from Sin, that it have no Dominion over him; he desires to be freed from Death, that he may have his *Conscience withal purged from dead Works, to serve the living God*, Heb. ix. 14. He would have Sin blotted out of an accusing Conscience, that it may be purged out of the Affections of the Heart, and he would have his Sins washed away for this End, especially that he may be *washed from his Sins*, Rev. i. 5. Now, as this is the great Desire and Design of such a Heart, in which there is no Guile, to have Sin purified and purged out of us, as well as pardoned, so there is a special Tye and Obligation upon *God our Father* by Promise, not only to pardon Sin, but to purge from Sin; not only to cover it with the Garment of *Christ's Righteousness*, and the Breadth of his infinite Love, but also to cleanse it by his *Spirit*, effectually applying that Blood to the purifying of the Heart. Now, where *God* hath bound himself voluntarily, and out of Love, do not ye loose him by Unbelief, for that will bind you into a Prison; but labour to receive these gracious Promises, and to take him bound as he offers. Believe, I say, that he will both forgive you, and in due Time will cleanse your Heart from the Love and Delight of Sin; believe his Promise, and Engagement by Promise to both, and this will set to a Seal to his Truth and Faithfulness. There is nothing in *God* to affright a Sinner, but his *Justice*, *Holiness* and *Righteousness*; but unto thee, who in the humble Confession of thy Sins flies into *Jesus Christ*, that very Thing which did discourage thee, may now encourage thee, and imbolden thee to come, for *he is just and faithful to forgive Sins*; his Justice being now satisfied, is ingaged that Way to forgive, not to punish.

SER-

SERMON XX.

1 John i. 10. *If we ſay that we have not ſinned, we make him a Liar, and his Word is not in us.*

THERE is nothing in which Religion more conſiſts, than in the true and unfeigned Knowledge of ourſelves. The Heathen ſuppoſed that Sentence, γνωθί σαυτὸν, *know thyſelf*, deſcended from Heaven. It was indeed the Motto of the wiſeſt and moſt religious amongſt them; but certain it is, that the true and ſincere Underſtanding of ourſelves, deſcends from *the Father of Lights*, and is a great Gift, as Man is capable of, next to the Knowledge of *God* himſelf. There is nothing more neceſſary to Man, either as Man, or as a Chriſtian, either as indowed with Reaſon, or profeſſing Religion, than that he ſhould be throughly acquainted with himſelf, his own Heart, its Diſpoſitions and Inclinations, and Luſts, his Ways and Actions, that while he travels abroad to other Creatures and Countries, he may not commit ſo ſhameful an Abſurdity, as to be a Stranger at home, where he ought to be beſt acquainted: Yet how ſad is it, that this which is ſo abſolutely needful, and univerſally profitable, ſhould be lying under the manyeſt Difficulties in the Attainment of it? So that there is nothing harder, than to bring a Man to a perfect Underſtanding of himſelf, what a vile, haughty and baſe Creature he is, how defiled and deſperately wicked his Nature, how abominable his Actions; in a Word, what a Compound of Darkneſs and Wickedneſs he is, a Heap of defiled Duſt, and a Maſs of Confuſion, a Sink of Impiety and Iniquity; even the beſt of Mankind, thoſe of the rareſt and moſt refined Extraction, take them at their beſt Eſtate; thus they are as Sepulchres painted without, and putrified within, outwardly adorned, and within full of Rottenneſs and Corruption, *the Imagination of his Heart only Evil continually.* Now, I ſay, here is the great Buſineſs and Labour of Religion, to bring a Man to the clear Diſcerning of his own Nature, to repreſent unto him juſtly his own Image, as it is painted in the Word of God, and preſented in the Glaſs of the Law; and ſo by ſuch a ſurprizing monſtruous Appearance, to affect his Heart to Self-abhorrency in Duſt and Aſhes, and to have this Repreſentation, however unpleaſant, yet moſt profitable, continually obverſant to our Minds, that we may not forget what manner of Perſons we are. Truly, I may ſay, if there be a Perfection in this Eſtate of Imperfection, herein it conſiſts; and if there be any Attainment of a Chriſtian, I account this the

the greatest, to be truly sensible of himself, and vile in his own Eyes.

It was the Custom of *Philip* King of *Macedonia*, after he had overcome the famous Republick of *Greece*, to have a young Man to salute him first every Morning with these Words, *Philippe homo es, Philip thou art a Man*, to the End that he might be daily minded of his Mortality and the Unconstancy of human Affairs, least he should be puft up with his Victory; and this was done before any could have Access to speak with him, as if it were, to season and prepare him for the Actions of the Day: But O, how much more ought a Christian to train up his own Heart, and accustom it this Way, to be his continual Remembrancer of himself, to suggest continually into his Mind, and whisper this first into his Ear in the Morning, and Mid-day, and Evening, *peccator es, thou art a Sinner*, to hold our own Image continually before us, in Prayer and Praises, in Restraints, in Liberties of Spirit, in religious Actions, and in all our ordinary Conversation, that it might salt and season all our Thoughts, Words and Deeds, and keep them from that ordinary Putrification, and Corruption of Pride and Self-conceit, which maketh all our Ointment stink.

If we say we have no Sin, we make him a Liar. Why is this repeated again? but to shew unto us, even to you Christians who believe in Christ, and are washen in his Blood, how hard it is to know ourselves aright. If we speak of the grosser Sort of Persons, they scarce know any Sin, nor the Nature and Vileness of any that they know, therefore they live in Security and Peace, and bless themselves in their own Hearts, as if they had no Sin; for such, I say, I shall only say unto them, that your Self-deceiving is not so subtile, but it may soon be discerned, your Lie is gross, and quickly seen through. But I would turn myself to you Christians, who are in some Measure acquainted with yourselves, yet there is something against you from this Word; after ye have once got some Peace from the Challenge of Sin, and Hope of Pardon, you many Times fall out of Acquaintance with yourselves, having attained by the Lord's Grace, to some Restraint of the more visible Outbreakings of Sin, you have not that Occasion to know yourselves by, and so you remain Strangers to your Hearts, and fall into better liking with yourselves, than the first Sight of yourselves permitted you. Now, my Beloved in the Lord, herein you are to be blamed, that you do not rather go into the Fountain, and there behold the Streams, than only to behold the Fountain in the Streams; you ought rather upon the Lord's Testimony of Man, to believe what is in you, before you find it, and see it breaking out, and keep this Character continually in your Sight, which will be more powerful to humble you, than many Out-breakings. I think we should be so well acquainted with our own Natures, as to account nothing strange to them that we see abroad, but rather think all the Grossness and Wickedness of Men suitable and correspondent to our Spirits, to that Root of Bitterness that is in them; The Goodness of God in restraining the Appearance of that in us, which is within us in Reality, should rather increase the Sense of our own Wickedness, than diminish it in our View.

Indeed, Self love is that which blinds us, and bemists us in the Sight of ourselves

ſelves, we look upon ourſelves though this falſe *Medium*, and it repreſents all Things more beautiful than they are; and therefore the Apoſtle hath Reaſon to ſay, *we deceive ourſelves, and we make God a Liar.* O, how much practical *Self-deceit* is there in the Application of Truth? There are many Errors contrary to the Truths themſelves, and many Deceivers, and deceived, who ſpread them: But I believe there is more Errors committed by Men, in the Application of Truths to their own Hearts, than in the Contemplation of it; and more ſelf-deceiving, than deceiving of others. It is ſtrange to think, how ſound and clear, and diſtinct a Man's Judgment will be againſt thoſe Evils in others, which yet he ſeeth not in himſelf; how many Chriſtians will be able to decypher the Nature of ſome Vices, and unbowel the Evils of them, and be quick-ſighted to eſpy the leaſt Appearance of them in another, and to condemn it; and yet ſo partial are they in judging themſelves, Self-love ſo purblinds them in this Reflection, that they cannot diſcern that in themſelves, which others cannot but diſcern. How often do Men declaim againſt *Pride*, and *Covetouſneſs*, and *Self-ſeeking*, and other Evils of that Kind? they will pour out a Flood of Eloquence and Zeal againſt them; and yet it is ſtrange they do not advert, that they are accuſing themſelves, and impannelling themſelves in ſuch Diſcourſes, tho' others, it may be, will eaſily perceive a Predominancy of theſe Evils in them. *Who art thou, O Man, who judgeth another, and doeſt the ſame Things? Canſt thou eſcape God's Judgment?* Rom. ii. 1. Conſider this, O Chriſtian, that thou may learn to turn the Edge of all thy Cenſures and Convictions againſt thyſelf, that thou may prevent all Men's Judgments of thee, in judging thyſelf *all Things* that Men can judge thee, that is, a *Chief of Sinners*, that hath the Root of all Sin in thee; and ſo thou may anticipate the divine Judgment too, *for if we judge ourſelves, we ſhall not be judged.* Labour thou to know theſe Evils that are incident to thy Nature, before others can know them, that is, in the Root and Fountain, before they come to the Fruit and Stream; to know Sins in the firſt Conceptions of them, before they come to ſuch Productions as are viſible; and this ſhall keep thee humble, and preſerve thee from much Sin, and thou ſhalt not deceive thyſelf, nor *diſhonour God, in making him a Liar*, but rather ſet to thy Seal to his Truth, and *his Word ſhall abide in thee.*

There is a common Rule that we have in judging ourſelves, by comparing ourſelves amongſt ourſelves, which (as *Paul* ſaith) *is not Wiſdom*, 2 Cor. x. 12. When we do not meaſure ourſelves by the perfect Rule of *God's holy Word*, but parallel ourſelves with other Perſons, who are ſtill defective from the Rule, far further from it, than any one is from another: This is the ordinary Method of the judging of Self-love; we compare with the worſt Perſons, and if we be not ſo bad as they, we think ourſelves good; if not ſo ignorant as ſome are, we preſume that we know; if not ſo profane as many, we believe ourſelves religious. *Lord, I am not as this Publican*, ſo ſaith many in their Hearts, there's a Curſer, a Swearer, a Drunkard, a blind ignorant Soul, that neglects Prayer in private and publick, and upon theſe Ruins of others Sins, they build ſome better Eſtimation of themſelves. But, I pray you, What will that avail you to be unlike

like them, if you be more unlike your Pattern, than they are unlike you? It may be, others will compare with these that are good, but it is with that which is worst in them, and not that which is best; how often do Men reckon this Way, here is a good Man, here is an eminent Person, yet he is such and such, subject to such Infirmities, and here Self-love flatters itself, and by flattering, deceives itself. My Beloved, let us learn to establish a more perfect Rule, which may shew all our Imperfections: Let our Rule ascend, that our Hearts may descend in Humility; but when our Rule and Pattern descends to Men of like Infirmities, then our Pride and Self-conceit ascends; and the higher we be that Way in our own Account, the lower we are indeed, and in God's Account; and the lower we be in ourselves, we lose nothing by it; for, as God is higher in our Account, so we are higher in God's Account, according to that standing Rule, *Mat.* xxiii. 12. *Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.*

SERMON XXI.

1 John ii. 1. *My little Children, these Things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father,* &c.

THE Gospel is an entire uniform Piece, all the Parts of it are interwoven through other, and interchangeably knit together; so that there can be no dividing of it, no more than of *Christ*'s Coat that was without Seam. If you have it not altogether by the divine Lot, you cannot truly have any Part of it, for they are so knit together, that if ye disjoyn them, you destroy them; and if they cease to be together, they cease altogether to be. I speak this, because there may be Pretensions to some abstracted Parts of Christianity; one Man pretends to Faith in *Jesus Christ*, and Perswasion of Pardon of Sin, and in this there may be some secret glorying arising from that Confidence; another may pretend to the Study of Holiness and Obedience, and may endeavour something that Way to do known Duties, and abstain from gross Sins. Now, I say, if the first do not conjoin the Study of the second; and, if the second do not lay down the first as the Foundation, both of them embrace a Shadow for the Thing itself, because they separate these Things that God hath joined, and so can have no Being but in Mens Fancy, when they are not conjoined. He that would pretend to a Righteousness of *Christ* without him, must withal study to have the Righteousness of the Law fulfilled within him; and he that endeavours to have Holiness within,

must withal go out of himself, to seek a Righteousness without him, whereupon to build his Peace and Acceptance with *God*, or else, neither of them hath truly any Righteousness without them, to cover them, or Holiness within, to cleanse them. Now here the beloved Apostle shews us this divine Contexture of the Gospel. The great and comprehensive End and Design of the Gospel is, Peace in Pardon of Sin, and Purity from Sin: *These Things I write unto you, that you sin not*, &c. The Gospel is comprised in Commands and Promises, both make one Web, and link in together. The immediate End of the Command is, *that we sin not*; nay, but there is another Thing always either expresly added, or tacitely understood; *but if any Man sin* (that desires not to sin) *we have an Advocate with the Father*: So the Promise comes in as a subsidiary Help to all the Precepts. It is annexed to give Security to a poor Soul from Despair; and therefore the Apostle teacheth you a blessed Art of constructing all the Commands and Exhortations of the Gospel, those of the highest Pitch, by supplying the full Sense with this happy and seasonable Caution or Caveat, *but if any Man sin*, &c. Doth that Command, *Be ye holy as I am holy, perfect as your heavenly Father*, which sounds so much unattainable Perfection, and seems to hold forth an inimitable Pattern; doth it, I say, discourage thee? Then, use the Apostle's Art, add this Caution to the Command, subjoin this sweet Exceptive, *But if any Man* (that desires to be holy, and gives himself to this Study) *fall often*, and *fall*, and defile himself with Unholiness, let him not despair, but know that *he hath an Advocate with the Father*; If that of *Paul's* urge thee, *present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, and be ye not conformed to the World, but transformed, and glorify God in your Bodies and Spirits which are his*, Rom. xii. 1, 2. and 1 Cor. vi. 20. And *cleanse yourselves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. And *walk in the Spirit*, and *walk as Children of the Light*, &c. If these do too rigorously exact upon thee, so as to make thee lose thy Peace, and weaken thy Heart and Hands; learn to make out a full Sentence, and fill up the full Sense and Meaning of the Gospel, according as you see it done here. *But if any Man*, (whose inward Heart-desires, and chief Designs are towards these Things, who would think himself happy in Holiness and Conformity to God, and estimates his Blessedness or Misery, from his Union or Separation from God) *sin*, then *we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous*, who hath all that we want, and will not suffer any Accusation to fasten upon us, *as long as he lives to make Intercession for us*.

On the other Hand, take a View of the Promises of the Gospel, tho' the immediate, and next End of them is, to give Peace to troubled Souls, and settle us in the high Point of our Acceptance with God; yet certainly they have a further End, even Purity from Sin, as well as Pardon of Sin, cleansing from all Sin and Filthiness, as well as covering of Filthiness. *These Things I write unto you, that ye sin not*; What Things? Consider what goes before, and what follows after, even the Publication of the *Word of Life*, and *eternal Life in him*, the Declaration of our Fellowship with *God in Christ*, the offering of the Blood of *Christ*, able to cleanse all Sin, the Promise of Pardon

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to the Penitent, Confession of Sin, *all these Things I write, that ye sin not*; so that this seems to be the ultimate End and chief Design of the Gospel, unto which all tends, unto which all work together: The Promises are for Peace, and Peace is for Purity; the Promises are for Faith, and Faith is for purifying of the Heart, and performing the Precepts: So that, all at Length returns to this, from whence, while we swerv'd, all this Misery is come upon us. In the Beginning it was thus, Man created to glorify God, by Obedience to his blessed Will; Sin interposeth, and marreth the whole Frame, and from this hath a Flood of Misery flowed in upon us: Well the Gospel comes offering a *Saviour*, and Forgiveness in him: Thus Peace is purchased, Pardon granted, the Soul is restored unto its primitive Condition and State of Subordination to God's Will; and so Redemption ends where Creation began, or rather in a more perfect Frame of the same Kind. The *second Adam* builds what the *first Adam* broke down, and the *Son* re-creates what the *Father* in the Beginning created, yea, with some Addition: In this new Edition of Mankind, all seems new; *new Heavens, and new Earth*; and that because the Creature that was made old, and defiled with Sin, is made new by Grace. Now, hence you may learn the second Part of this Lesson that the Apostle teacheth us; as ye ought to correct (as it were) Precepts of the Gospel, by subjoining Promises in this Manner, so ye ought to direct Promises towards the Performance of his Precepts, as their chief End. Whensoever you read it written, *The Blood of Christ cleanseth from all Sin*; *if we confess, he is faithful to forgive our Sins. God so loved the World, that he gave his Son. He that believeth hath everlasting Life*, &c. Then make up the entire Sense and Meaning, after this Manner, *These Things are written, that we sin not.* Is there a Redemption from Wrath published? Is there Reconciliation with God preached? And are we beseeched to come and have the Benefit of them? Then say, and supply within thine own Heart, *These Things are written, published, and preached, that we may not sin.* Look to the furthest End of these Things, it is, *that we sin not.* The End of Things, the Scope of Writings, and the Purpose of Actions, is the very Measure of them, and so that is the best Interpreter of them. The Scope of Scriptures, is by all accounted the very Thread that will lead a Man right in and out of the Labyrinths that are in it. And so it is used as the Rule of the Interpretation in the Parts of it. Now, (my Beloved in the Lord) take here the Scope of the whole Scriptures, the Mark that all the Gospel shoots at, *These Things I write unto you, that ye sin not.* You hear it is true, *of Pardon of Sin, of Delivery from Wrath, of not coming into Condemnation, of covering Offences, of blotting them out as a Cloud*; all these you read and hear; but what do they all aim at? If you consider not that attentively, you shall no more understand the plain Gospel, than you can expound a Parable without observing the Scope of it. Do you think these have no further Aim, than to give you Peace, and to secure you from Fears and Terrors, that you may then walk as you list, and follow the Guiding of your own Hearts? Nay, if you take it so, you totally mistake it; if you do not read on, and find all these Things written to this End, *that we sin not, you err,*

err, not understanding, or misunderstanding *the Scriptures.*

These Things I write unto you, little Children: To inforce this the more sweetly, he useth this affectionate Compellation, *little Children,* for, in all Things Affection hath a mighty Stroak, almost as much as Reason. It is the most suitable Way to prevail with the Spirit of a Man, to deal in Love and Tenderness with it; it insinuates more sweetly, and so can have less Resistance, and therefore works more strongly. It is true, another Way of Terrors, Threatnings, and Reproofs, mingled with sharp and heavy Words of Challenges, may make a great Deal of more Noise, and yet it hath not such Virtue, to prevail with a rational Soul: The Spirit of the Lord was not in the *Wind,* nor in the *Earthquake,* nor in the *Fire,* but in the *still and calm Voice* which came to *Elijah,* 1 *Kings* xix. 11, 12. These suit not the gentle Dove-like Disposition of the Spirit; and tho' they be fit to rent Rocks in Pieces, yet they cannot truly break Hearts, and make them contrite: The Sun will make a Man sooner part with his Cloak than the Wind; such is the Difference between the warm Beams of Affection, and the boistrous Violence of Passion or Terror. Now, O that there were such a Spirit in them who preach the Gospel, such a fatherly Affection, that with much Pity and Compassion they might call Sinners from the Ways of Death. O, there is no Subject, in which a Man may have more Room for melting Affections, nothing that will admit of such Bowels of Compassion as this, the Multitude of Souls posting to Destruction, and so blindfolded that they cannot see it. Here the Fountain of Tears might be opened to run abundantly. The Lord personates a tender-hearted Father or Husband often, *Oh, why will ye die? Ye have broken my Heart with your whorish Heart: O Jerusalem, how oft would I, but thou wouldst not?* When he, who is not subject to humane Passions, expresseth himself thus, how much more doth it become us, poor Creatures, to have Pity on our Fellow-creatures? Should it not press out from us many Groans, to see so many perishing, even beside Salvation. I wish you would take it so, that *the Warning you to flee from the Wrath to come,* is the greatest Act of Favour and Love that can be done to you. It becomes us to be solicitous about you, and declare unto you, that you will meet with Destruction in those Paths you walk into: That *these Ways go down to the Chambers of Death.* O that it might be done with so much feeling Compassion of your Misery, as the Necessity of it requires. But, why do many of you take it so hard to be thus forewarned, and have your Danger declared unto you? I guess at the Reason of it; you are in a Distemper, as sick Children distemper'd in a Fever, who are not capable to discern their Parents tender Affection, when it crosseth their own Inclinations and Ways.

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SERMON XXII.

1 John ii. 1. *My little Children, these Things write I unto you, that ye sin not: And if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*, &c.

CHRIST Jesus came by Water and by Blood, not by Water only, but by Blood also, and I add, not by Blood only, but by Water also, *Chap.* v. 6. In Sin there is the Guilt binding over to Punishment, and there is the Filth or Spot that defileth the Soul in God's Sight: To take away Guilt, nothing so fit as Blood; for there is no Punishment beyond Blood; therefore saith the Apostle, *without the shedding of Blood there is no Remission of Sin*, Heb. ix. 22. and for the Stain and Spot, nothing is so suitable as Water, for that is generally appointed for cleansing; and some Shadow of this the Heathens had, who had their Lustrations in Water, and their Expiations by Blood; but more significantly and plainly, the *Jews*, who had their Purifications by sprinkling of Water, *Numb.* viii. 7. and Expiations by sacrificing of slain Beasts; but all these were but evanishing Shadows, now the Substance is come, *Jesus Christ is come in Water and Blood*; in Water, to cleanse the Spots of the Soul, to purify it from all Filthiness; and in Blood, to satisfy for Sin, and remove the Punishment. You have both in these Words of the Apostle, (for he labours to set out unto us the *true Christ*, whole and intire) *These Things I write unto you that ye sin not*: Here is the proper End of the Water; and *if any Man sin we have Christ a Propitiation for our Sins*; here is the Blood; the End of the Blood is to save us, the End of the Water is, that we sin not, since we are saved. He came in the Blood of Expiation, because we had sinned; he came in the Water of Sanctification, that we might not sin. His Blood speaks Peace to the Soul, and the Water subjoins, *but let them not return to Folly*. His Blood cries, *Behold thou art made whole*, and the Water ecchoes unto it, *sin no more, lest a worse Thing befall thee*, Joh. v. 14. These two Streams of Water and Blood, which are appointed for Purity and Pardon, run intermingled all alongs, and so the proper Effects of them are interchangeably attributed to either of them, *he hath washed us in his Blood*, Rev. i. 5. and vii. 14. *And the Blood of Christ cleanseth us from all Sin.* Then certainly, this Blood cannot be without Water, it is never separated from it: The proper Effect of Blood is to cover Sin; but because the Water runs in that Channel, and is conveyed by the Blood thither, therefore it doth cleanse Sin, as well as cover it.

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These Things I write unto you, that ye sin not: This then is the Design of the whole Gospel, the great and grand Design, to destroy Sin, and save the Sinner. There is a Treaty of Peace made with the Sinner, and *Christ is the Peacemaker:* A Tender of Life and Salvation is made to him, but there is no Treaty, no Capitulation or Composition with Sin; out it must go, first out of its Dominion, then out of its Habitation. It must first lose its Power, and then its Being in a Believer; yea, this is one of the chief Articles of our Peace, not only required of us as our Duty, that we should destroy that which cannot but destroy us; (for, if any Man will needs hug and embrace his Sins, and cannot part with them, he must needs die in their Embracements, because the Council of Heaven hath irrevocably past a fatal Sentence against Sin, as the only Thing that in all the Creation hath the most perfect Opposition to his blessed Will, and Contrariety to his holy Nature) but also and especially, as the great Stipulation and Promise upon his Part, *to redeem us from all our Iniquities, and purify us to himself, a People zealous of good Works*; and not only to redeem us from Hell, and deliver us from Wrath, *Tit.* ii. 14. He hath undertaken this great Work, to compesce this Mutiny and Rebellion that was raised up in the Creation by Sin, else what Peace could be between *God* and *us*, as long as his Enemy and ours dwelt in our Bosom, and we at Peace with it.

Now, take a short View of these Things that are written in the preceeding Chapter, and you shall see that the harmonious Voice of all that is in the Gospel, is this, *that we sin not.* Let me say further, as *these Things are written that we sin not*, so all Things are done *that we sin not.* Take all the whole Work of Creation, of Providence, of Redemption, all of them speak one Language, *that we sin not: Day unto Day uttereth Speech, and Night unto Night sheweth Knowledge: There is no Speech nor Language where their Voice is not heard*, Psal. xix. 2, 3. And, as in that Place, their Voice proclaims the Glory, Majesty, and Goodness of God, so they, with the same Sound, proclaim and declare, That we should not sin against such a *God*, so great, and so good; all that we see suggests and insinuates this unto our Hearts: All that we hear whispers this unto our Ears, *that we sin not: That he made us, and not we ourselves, and that we are the very Work of his Hands*: This speaks our absolute and essential Dependence on him, and therefore proclaims with a loud Voice, that *Sin*, which would cut off this Subordination, and loose from this Dependence upon his holy Will, is a monstrous unnatural Thing. Take all his Mercies towards us, whether general or particular, the transcendent Abundance of his infinite Goodness in the Earth, that River of his Riches that runs through it, to water every Man, and brings Supply to his Doors, that infinite Variety that is in Heaven and Earth, and all of them of equal Birth-right with Man, yet by the Law of our Maker, a Yoke of Subjection and Service to Man is imposed upon them; so that Man is, in a Manner, set in the Center of all, to the end, that all the several Qualifications and Perfections that are in every Creature, may concenter and meet together in him, and flow towards him. Look upon all his particular Acts of Care and Favour towards thee, consider his Judgments upon the World, upon the Nation, or thine own Per-

Person; put to thine Ear, and hear, this is the joint harmonious Melody, this is the Proclamation of all, *that we sin not, that we sin not against so good a God,* and so *great a God,* that were Wickedness, this were Madness. If he wound, it is *that we sin not*; if he heal again, it is *that we sin not*: Doth he kill, it is *that we sin not*: Doth he make alive, it is for the same End. Doth he shut up and restrain our Liberty, either by Bondage, or Sickness, or other Afflictions, why? he means *that we sin not*: Doth he open again, he means the same Thing, *that we sin no more least a worse Thing befall us.* Doth he make many to fall in Battle, and turns the Fury of that upon us, the Voice of it is, that you who are left behind, should *sin no more.* Is there Severity towards others, and towards you Clemency; O! the loud Noise of that is, *sin not.* But alas, the Result of all is, that which is written, *Psal.* lxxviii. 32. *Nevertheless they sinned still.* In the midst of so many concurring Testimonies, in the very Throng of all the Sounds and Voices that all the Works of God utter, in the very hearing of these, nevertheless *to sin still,* and *not to return and enquire early after God*: This is the Plague and Judgment of the Nation.

But let us return to the Words, *These Things,* &c. *That which is written of the Word of Life, that which was from the Beginning, and was manifested unto us,* that is written *that we sin not*: For, saith this same Apostle, Ch. iii. 5, 8. *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our Sins, and in him is no sin*; yea, for this very Purpose, (saith he) *that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* Now, is this the great Business, that drew the *Son* out of the *Father's* Bosom, to destroy the Arch-enemy and capital Rebel, *Sin,* which, as to Man, is a Work of Satan's, because it first enter'd in Man by the Devil's Suggestion and Counsel: All that Misery and Ruin, all these Works of Darkness and Death, that Satan had by his Malice and Policy wrought upon, and in poor Mankind, *Jesus was manifested in the Flesh without Sin, to destroy and take away Sin out of our Flesh, and to abolish and destroy Satan's Work,* which he had builded upon the Ruins of *God's* Work, of the Image of God, and to repair and renew that first blessed Work of God in Man, *Eph.* iv. 23, 24.

Now, O how cogent and persuading is this; one so high, come down so low, one dwelling in inaccessible Glory, manifested in the Flesh, in the Infirmity and Weakness of it, to this very Purpose, to repair the Creation, to make up the Breaches of it, to destroy Sin, and save the Sinner; what Force is in this to persuade a Soul that truly believes it, *not to sin*? For, may he think within himself, Shall I save that which *Christ* came to destroy? Shall I entertain and maintain that which he came to take away, and do what in me lies to frustrate the great End of his glorious and wonderful Descent from Heaven? Shall I join Hands, and associate with my Lusts, and war for them, *which war against my Soul,* and him that would save my Soul? Nay, let us conclude (my Beloved) within our own Hearts, Is the *Word and Prince of Life* manifested from Heaven, and come to marr and unmake that Work of Satan, that he may rescue me from under his Tyranny? Then God forbid that I should help Satan to build up that which *my Saviour* is casting down, and to make a Prison for myself, and Cords to bind me in it for everlasting. Nay, will a believing

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Soul ſay, rather let me be a *Worker together with Chriſt*, though faintly, yet I reſolve to wreſtle with him, to pull down all the ſtrong Holds that Satan keeps in my Nature, and ſo to congratulate and conſent to him, who is the Avenger, and Aſſerter of my Liberty.

Then conſider the greateſt End, and furtheſt Deſign of the Goſpel, how it is inſeparably chained and linked into this, *that we ſin not*. We are called to *Fellowſhip with the Father and the Son*, and herein is his Glory, and our Happineſs. Now, this proclaims with a loud Voice, *that we ſin not*; for, what more contrary to that Deſign of Union, and Communion with God, than *to ſin*, which diſunites and diſcommunicates the Soul from God. The Nature of Sin you know, *it is the Tranſgreſſion of his Law*, and ſo, it is the very juſt Oppoſition of the Creatures Will, to the Will of him that made it. Now, how do ye imagine that this can conſiſt with true Friendſhip and Fellowſhip, which looſeth that Conjunction of Wills and Affections, which is the Bond of true Friendſhip, and the Ground of Fellowſhip, *idem velle, atque idem nolle, hæc demum vera amicitia eſt*. The Conſpiracy of our Deſires and Delights in one Point with God's, this ſweet Co-incidency makes out Communion, and what Communion then with God, when that which his Soul abhors, is your Delight, and his Delight is not your Deſire? *What Communion hath Light with Darkneſs?* Sin is Darkneſs; all Sin, but eſpecially Sin entertained and maintained, Sin that hath the full Conſent of the Heart, and carrieth the whole Man after it, that is *Egyptian*-Darkneſs, an univerſal Darkneſs over the Soul; this being interpoſed between God and the Soul, breaks off Communion, ecclipſes that Soul totally. Therefore, (my Beloved,) if you do believe that you are called unto this high Dignity of Fellowſhip with God, and if your Souls be ſtirred with ſome holy Ambition after it, conſider that *theſe Things are written, that ye ſin not*; conſider what Baſeneſs is in it, for one that hath ſuch a noble Deſign, as Fellowſhip with the higheſt, to debaſe his Soul ſo far, and ſo low, as to ſerve ſinful and fleſhly Luſts: There is a Vileneſs and Wretchedneſs in the Service of Sin, that any Soul, truly and nobly principled, cannot but look upon it with Indignation, becauſe he can behold nothing but Indignity in it. *Shall I who am a Ruler* (ſaith *Nehemiah*) *ſhall ſuch a Man as I flee? and who is there, that being, as I am, would flee?* Neh. vi. 11. A Chriſtian hath more Reaſon, Shall ſuch a Man as I, who am born again to ſuch a Hope, and called to ſuch a high Dignity? Shall I, who aim and aſpire ſo high as Fellowſhip with God, debaſe and degrade myſelf with the vileſt Servitude? Shall I defile in that Puddle again, till my own Cloaths abhor me, who aim at ſo pure and ſo holy a Society? Shall I yoke in myſelf with Drunkards, Liars, Swearers, and other Slaves of Sin? Shall I rank myſelf thus, and conform myſelf to the World, ſeeing there is a noble and glorious Society to incorporate with, the *King of Kings* to converſe with daily? Alas, what are theſe Worms that ſit on Thrones to him? But far more, how baſe are theſe Companions in Iniquity, your Pot-companions? *&c.* And what a vile Society is it, like that of the Bottomleſs Pit, where Devils are linked together in Chains?

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SERMON XXIII.

1 John ii. 1. *My little Children, these Things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*, &c.

IN the Gospel we have the most perfect Provision against both these Extremities, that Souls are ready to run upon, the Rock of desperate Distrust, and the Quick-sands of presumptuous Wantonness. It may be said to be *a well ordered Covenant in all Things*, that hath caveated and cautioned the whole Matter of our Salvation, in such a Way, that there is neither Place for Discouragement and Down-casting, nor yet Room for Liberty in Sin; there is no Exemption from the Obligation of God's holy Law, and yet there is Pardon for the Breach of it, and Exemption from the Curse; there is no Peace, no Capitulation with Sin, and yet there is Peace concluded with the Sinner, who is, by that Agreement, bound to fall out with Sin; there is no Dispensation for Sin, and from the Perfection of Holiness, and yet there is an Advocation for the Sinner, which aims and studies after it; so that in Sum, the whole Gospel is comprised in this, *He speaks Peace to his Saints, but let them not return to Folly; thou art made whole, sin no more:* All that is in the Gospel saith this, *that thou should sin no more*. But, because Sin is necessarily incident, therefore all that is in the Gospel, speaks this further, tho' ye be surprised in Sin, yet believe; and this is the Round that a Believer is to walk into, to turn from Pardon to Purity, and from Pollution again to Pardon, for these Voices and Sounds are interchanged continually; *If ye have sinned, believe in Christ the Advocate and Sacrifice, and, because ye have believed, sin not; but if ye be overtaken in Sin, yet believe*; and as this is daily renewed, so the Soul's Study and Endeavour in them, should be daily renewed too. If ye have sinned, despair not; if ye be pardoned, yet presume not: After Sin there is Hope, it is true, because *there is Forgiveness with him*; but after Forgiveness, there must be Fear to offend his Goodness; *For there is Forgiveness with him, that he may be feared*, Psal. cxxx. 4. And this is the Situation I would desire my Soul into, to be placed between Hope of his Mercy, and Fear of Sin, the Faith of his Favour, and the Hatred of Sin, which he will not favour; and how happy were a Soul to be confined within these and kept captive to its true Liberty?

I ſpake a little before, how theſe Fundamental Truths that are ſet down before, do all aim at this one Mark, *that we ſin not*; Now I proceed. That Declaration what God is, *Verſe* 5. is expreſly directed to this Purpoſe, and applyed, *Verſe* 6. *God is Light*, and therefore *ſin not*, for Sin is Darkneſs; *he is Light*, for Purity and Beauty of Holineſs, and Perfection of Knowledge, that *true Light in which is no Darkneſs*, that unmixt Light, all homogeneous to itſelf, therefore *ſin not*, for that is a Work of the Night, and of the Darkneſs, that proceeds from the Blindneſs and Eſtrangement of your Minds, and Ignorance of your Hearts, and it cannot but prepare and fit you for theſe everlaſting Chains of Darkneſs. Call God what you will, name all his Names, Stiles and Tittles, ſpell all the Characters of it, and ſtill you may find it written at every one of them, *ſin not*; Is *he Light*? then ſin not. Is *he Life?* then *ſin not*; for Sin will ſeparate you from his Light and Life; Sin will darken your Souls, and kill them. Is *he Love?* then *ſin not*; *God is Love* (ſaith *John*) O then ſin not againſt Love. Hatred of any good Thing is deformed, but the Hatred of the beautiful Image of the original Love, that is monſtruous: *God is Love*, and in his Love is your Life and Light; then to ſin againſt him, it is not ſimple Diſobedience; nor is it only groſſer Rebellion, but it hath that abominable Stain of Ingratitude in it. Do you read, that it is written, *he is holy*, then *ſin not*, for this is moſt repugnant to his Holineſs, *his holy Eyes cannot ſee it*. Therefore, if thou would have him look upon thee with Favour, thou muſt not look upon Sin with Favour, or entertain it with Delight; Is it written that he is *great* and *powerful*? then *ſin not*, that were Madneſs. Is it written, that he is *good* and *gracious*? Then it is written, that ye *ſin not*, for that were Wickedneſs: It were an unſpeakable Folly and Madneſs, to offend ſo *great a God*, that can ſo eaſily avenge himſelf; and it were abominable Perverſeneſs and Wickedneſs, to ſin againſt *ſo good and gracious a God*, who, tho' he may avenge himſelf, yet offers Pardon and Peace, and beſeecheth us to accept it. Is he *juſt?* then *ſin not*; for *he will not acquit the Wicked, nor hold them Guiltleſs*, them, who do acquit themſelves, and yet hold by their Sins. And is he *merciful?* then, O then, *ſin not*, becauſe he hath acquitted thee, becauſe he is ready to blot out thy Guilt; wilt thou ſin againſt Mercy, that muſt ſave thee? Again, is it written, *that the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all Sin?* that is written, *that ye ſin not*. It is true, it is written, becauſe ye have ſinned already, that ye may know how it may be pardoned. But moreover it is written, *that ye ſin no more*, that ſo, more Sin may be prevented, at leaſt, deliberate continued walking in Sin; ſo that this Blood hath a twofold Vertue and Uſe, to be the greateſt Encouragement to a Soul troubled for Sin, and the chiefeſt Argument and Inducement for a Soul not to ſin: This Medicine, or this Plaiſter, hath two notable Vertues, reſtorative and preſervative, *To reſtore the Bones that already are broken, through falling in Sin*; and *to preſerve our Feet from further falling in Sin*. It hath a healing Vertue, for theſe Bruiſes that are in the Soul; and beſides, it is an Antidote and ſovereign Preſervative againſt the Poyſon and Infection of Sin and the World. What Motive is like this? *The Son of God*

God shed his Blood for our Sins, they cost a dear Price. O, how precious was the Ransom? More precious than Gold, and Silver, and precious Stones, because *the Redemption of the Soul is so precious, that it would have ceased for ever* without it. Now, what Soul can deliberately think of this, and receive it with any Affection into the Heart, but he shall find the most vehement Perswasion against Sin? He cannot but behold the Hainousness and infinite Evil that is in it, which required such an infinite Recompence. And can a Soul on that View run to the Puddle and defile again, when he sees how dearly the Fountain for Cleansing was purchased? Can a believing Heart have such treacherous Thoughts harboured within him, *to crucify afresh the Lord of Glory*, and, as it were, *to trample under Foot his Blood?* No certainly, he that believes in this Blood, cannot use it so dishonourably and basely; as it is written, *that he sin not*, so he reads it, and believes it, that he may not sin, as well as because he hath sinned. Many speak of this Blood, and think they apply it to the Cleansing of their Sin past; but it is rather, that they may sin with more Liberty, as if the End of vomiting up a Surfeit of Sin, were to surfeit more; and the End of washing, were nothing else but to defile again. Certainly, this Blood is not for such Souls, not one Word of Comfort in the *Word*, not one Drop of Hope in the Blood, to them who pretend to believe in *Christ's Blood*, and continue in Sin, as fresh and lively as ever they did, nothing abated of their Desires or Customs: But if we confess our Sins, God will forgive (say you) and this we may do at any Time, and this we do daily. Nay, but (saith *John*) *this is written that you sin not*, not to incourage you to sin. It is not recorded for this End, that you may live after your own Imaginations and former Customs, with Security and Peace, upon this Presumption, that Pardon is easily procurable, if I say, *God have Mercy upon me*, ere I die. Do not deceive yourselves, for it is written for the just Contrary, *that you sin no more, and return no more to Folly*. If he had said, if we sin, tho' we confess, yet he is just to punish us, you would then be driven to Desperation, and from that to a desperate Conclusion; since we must be punished however, let us not punish ourselves here, in mortifying our Flesh; *Let us eat and drink, for To-morrow we shall die*: Die we must, let us deserve it; for where there is no Hope, there is no Help for Reformation. But now, when there is such an unexpected Proposal of Grace, when *God* who is free to punish us, becomes indebted by his Promise to forgive our Debts, we humbly submitting to him, and confessing our Guiltiness; this Surprisal of Clemency and Moderation, should, yea, certainly will overcome any Heart that truly believes it, and conquer it to his Love and Obedience. The more easily he forgive Sin, the more hardly will a believing Heart be drawn to Sin. You know any ingenuous Spirit will more easily be conquered by Kindness and Condescendency, than Severity and Violence; these *Cords of Love, are the Cords of a Man*, suited to the Nature of Man in whom there is any Sparkle of Ingenuity remaining; how often have Men been ingaged and overcome by Clemency and Goodness, who could not be conquered by Force of Arms? Enemies have been made Friends by this Means, such Power is in it, to

knit Hearts together. *Auguſtus*, when he was acquainted with the Conſpiracy of one of his chief Minions, *Cinna*, whom he had made a Friend of an Enemy, by Kindneſs and Courteſy, takes the ſame Way to make of a Traitor a conſtant Friend; he doth not puniſh him, as he had done others, but calls for him, and declares unto him his vile Ingratitude, that when he had given him Life and Liberty, he ſhould conſpire to take away his Prince's Life; well, when he is confounded and aſtoniſhed, and cannot open his Mouth, ſaith, *Auguſtus*, I give thee thy Life again, firſt an open Enemy, and now a Traitor; yet from this Day, let an inviolable Friendſhip be bound up between us, and ſo it proved; for this Way of dealing did totally overcome his Heart, and blot out all ſeditious Thoughts. But O, how incomparably greater is his Condeſcendency and Clemency, whoſe Perſon is ſo high and ſacred, whoſe Laws are ſo juſt and holy, and we ſo baſe and wretched, to pardon ſuch infinite Guilt, Rebellion and Treachery, againſt ſuch an infinite Majeſty; and that, when a Soul doth but begin to bluſh, and be aſhamed with itſelf, and cannot open its Mouth; I ſay, this rare and unparallel'd Goodneſs and Mercy being conſidered, cannot but tame and daunt the wildeſt and moſt ſavage Nature; wild Beaſts are not brought in Subjection and tamed, but by gentle Uſage; it is not Fierceneſs and Violence can cure their Fierceneſs, but Meekneſs and Condeſcendency, to follow their Humours, and ſoft Dealing with them; as a Rod is not bowed by great Strength, but broken, even ſo, theſe Things, of the Promiſe of Pardon for Sin, of the Grace and Readineſs of God to pardon upon the eaſieſt Terms, are written for this End, that our wild and undaunted Natures may be tamed, and may bow and ſubmit willingly to the Yoke of his Obedience, and may henceforth knit ſuch a ſacred Bond of Friendſhip and Fellowſhip with God, as may never be broken.

But, ſay ye, who is he that ſins not? *Who can ſay, my Heart is pure, and my Way is clean? Who can ſay, I have no Sin?* And therefore that cannot be expected which you crave. Nay, but ſaith the Apoſtle, *Theſe Things I write unto you, that ye ſin not.* Becauſe Sin is in all, therefore you excuſe yourſelf in your Sins, and take Liberty to ſin; but the very contrary, is the Intent of the declaring unto us that we have Sin; he ſhews that none want it, not that ye may be the more indulgent towards it, but the more watchful againſt it. It is not to make you ſecure, but rather to give you Alarm; even the beſt and holieſt, it is an Alarm to them, to tell them that Sin is *in confimis*, in their very Borders, that the Enemy is even in their Quarters, yea, in their Boſom; certainly, this ſhould ſo much the more excite us againſt it, and arm us for it every Moment, leſt either by Fraud, or Force, by ſecret Undermining, or open Violence, it draw us away from *God*. This Word, *If we ſay we have no Sin, we lie*, it is a Watch-word given to Men, a Warning to enter in Conſideration of themſelves, for the Enemy being within, there is no flying from him, we carry him about with us, and being within, he is leſs diſcerned; and therefore we ought to awake, and *ſo walk circumſpectly*, with Eyes in our Head, leſt we be ſurprized at Unawares, either in that Time we know not of, or at that Place we leaſt ſuſpect. And to others of you, who have never attained any Victory over

over your Sins, and scarce have a discerning of them; I would only say this, that the Universality of Sin's Inhabitation, or Being in all Men, even the godly, will not excuse Sin's Domination and Reign in you. It is strange, that since the Holiest have need of continual watching against this Bosom-enemy, that ye who have both little Knowledge and Strength, should think ye may live securely, and not trouble yourselves. If they have need to take heed, how much more have ye, since it is but in them, but it reigns in you?

SERMON XXIV.

1 John ii. 1. ——*And if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*, &c.

THERE is here a sad Supposition, but too certain, that any Man may sin, yea, that all Men will sin, even those who have most Communion with God, and Interest in the Blood of Christ; yet they are not altogether exempted from this fatal Lot of Mankind, it is incident even to them to sin, and too frequently incident; but yet we have a happy and sweet Provision, for Indemnity from the Hazard of Sin: *We have an Advocate with the Father*. Grant the Probability, yea, the Necessity and Certainty of that Supposal, *If any Man do sin*, yet there is as much Certainty of Indemnity from Sin, as of Necessity of falling into Sin. It is not more sure, that we shall carry about with us Matter of Sorrow and Mourning; but that it is as sure, that we have always without us Matter of rejoicing.

Let me then speak a Word to these Particulars; *First*, That Sin is incident to the best, even after all Perswasions, Convictions, Resolutions, Desires, and Designs to avoid Sin. *Next*, That it is usual for Sins after Mercy, Conviction, and Resolution to appear so hainous, that they may seem to over-top the Mercy of *God*, and the Merits of *Christ*; a Soul is most apt to be troubled with Guilt contracted after Pardon, and a Desire of Purity. But withal, I would in the last Place represent to you, that there is no Ground of Despair, or Discouragement for such an one, tho' there be Ground of Humiliation and Mourning: There is a Provision made in the Gospel against these continually incident Fears; there is a Security against the Hazard of surprising Sins; and, that this Comfort belongs only to such Souls, as unfeignedly desire not to sin, and are in some Measure perswaded by the Grace of God not to sin, not to them who willingly give up themselves to their own Lusts. It is a common Doctrine as any, that Sin hath some Lodging in every Mans Heart and Flesh, and is not totally cast out, but only bound with Chains within

in, that it do not exercise its old Dominion over a Believer: But I fear, the most common Truths, tho' they be most substantial in themselves, yet are but circumstantial in our Apprehensions, and very rarely and extroardinarily have Place in the deeper and more serious Thoughts of our Hearts: They are commonly confessed, it is true, but as seldom considered, I am sure; for who did truly ponder the Inclinableness of our Nature to Sin, the strong Propension of the Heart to Evil, the Deceitfulness of Sin itself, and the many circumstantial Helps, and Additions it gets to its Strength, but he would stand in Awe, and watch seriously over himself. I dare say, many sin, rather because of a misapprehended Immunity from it, and a mis-reckoning of their own Measure and Strength, than because of the Strength of Sin itself. I know no one Thing makes Sin so strong as this, that we do not apprehend our own Weakness, and so give over Watchfulness, which is the greatest and best Part of our Armour of Defence, when it is done in Faith, and this Watch kept on the Tower of the Lord's Promises; the Apprehension of our escaping the Pollutions of the World, and of some Strength to resist them; this adds no more Strenght to us, but diminisheth and taketh from our Vigilancy, and so expoleth us, as it were, naked and secure, to the Cruelty of our Adversary. I would wish every Christian to be throughly acquainted, and often conversant in two Books of Sophistry, I may so term them, *The Deceitfulness of his own Heart, and the Deceivableness of Sin*, Jer. xv. and *Heb.* iii. 13. These are the Volumes he would daily turn over, to learn to discern the Sophistications, Self-flatteries, Blindness, Darkness, and Self-love of his own Heart; to take off the deceiving Mask of Pretences and Appearances of Good, and behold sensibly the true and real Inclinations of the Heart to Wickedness, to Passion, Pride, Uncleanness, Malice, Envy, and all these Affections of the Flesh: to find out the true beating of the Pulse of the Heart; and indeed this just Discerning and Discovery of the Thief in the Soul, is a great Part of his Arraignment; for if Sin ly under the View of an Eye that hates it, and loves God, much of its Power and Virtue, which ly in Darkness, is taken away. I press this the more, because I verily apprehend it to be the Plague of many Christians, who have some general Insight into the Matter of Good and Evil, and espy some more gross Corruption in themselves, and have some Affection to Good; yet this Estrangedness to our own Hearts, and the Vein or Strain of them, the not unbowelling of our hidden Affections, and not discerning of the Poison of Pride, Self-love, Love of the World, and such like Lusts, which are intermingled in all that we do, and spread, as it were, universally through the whole Man; this, I say, makes most of us be subject to so many Surprisals by Sin, we are often rooted before we draw up, and often conquered ere we consider: This makes us such Unproficients in Mortification, so that scarce any Sin is killed, while the Roots of all Sin lies hid under the Ground from us. Then withal, I desire you to study how deceivable a Thing Sin is, how many deceitful fair Pretences it is covered with, *It hath the Voice of Jacob, but the Hands of Esau*; look what it is that is pleasant or suitable to our natural Spirits, it insinuates itself always under the Shadow of that; and

and, if there be not much Heedfulness and Attention, and much Experience of the Wiles of that subtile One; it is a great Hazard to be catched with it unadvisedly, while we clasp about another Thing, which is presented as a Bait and Allurement. Now, is it any Wonder that a poor Soul be drawn to sin often, when our Enemy doth not for the most Part profess Hostility, but Friendship, and under that Colour pleads Admission within our Forts; and besides, we have a treacherous Friend in our Bosom, that betrays us into his Hands, that is our own deceitful Hearts: These Things I mention, to put you in Remembrance of what Condition you are in, in this World, and what Posture you should be into; *Watch*, (I say) *and when ye have done all, stand with your Loins girt*; and tho' you cannot possibly escape all Sin, yet certainly it is not in vain thus to set against it, and keep a Watch over it, for by this Means you shall escape more Sin, and sin less; as he that aims at the Mark, tho' he do not hit it, yet he shall ordinarily come nearer it, than he that shoots only at Random; and as the Army that is most vigilant and watchful, tho' they cannot prevent all Losses and Hazards, yet commonly they are not found at such a Loss, as those who are proud, confident and secure.

Now, as it is supposed, that Sin is ordinarily incident to the Child of God, so it is especially to be caveated, that he despair not in his Sins; for it is imported in this Provision, that the Believer is in great Hazard upon new Lapses into Sin, either of daily Incursion, or of a grosser Nature, to be discouraged: As there is so much Corruption in any Mans Heart, as will *turn the Grace of God into Wantonness*, and incline him upon the Proposal of free Grace, to presume to take Liberty to the Flesh; so, that same Corruption upon another Occasion works another Way, upon the Supposal of new Sins, aggravated with preceeding Mercy and Grace in God, and Convictions and Resolutions in him, to drive him into Despondency and Dejection of Spirit, as if there were no Pardon for such Sins. And indeed, it is no Wonder if the Soul be thus set upon, if we set aside the Consideration of the infinite Grace of God, that far surpasseth the ill Deserts of Men. To speak of the very Nature of the Thing itself, there is no Sin in its own Nature more unpardonable, than Sin after Pardon; nothing so hainous, aggravated with so many high Circumstances, which mingleth it with the worst Ingredients, as this Sin, after so much Grace revealed in the Gospel, to the End that we may not sin. Sins washed so freely, in so precious a Fountain, and yet to defile again; Sins forgiven so readily and easily, the Debt whereof, in Justice the whole Creation was not able to pay, and yet to offend so gracious a *Father*; a Soul being throughly convinced of the Vanity, Folly, and Madness of Sin, of the Deceitfulness and Baseness of its Pleasures, and set in a Posture against it, as the most deadly Enemy; and yet after all this, to be foiled, deceived and insnared: Here, I say, are very piercing Considerations, which cannot but set the Challenge very deep into the Heart of a Christian, and wound him sore; how will he be filled with Shame and Confusion of Face, if he look upon God? Every Look or Beam of whose Countenance, represents unto the Soul the vilest and most abominable Visage of Sin; or, if he look into himself, there is nothing but self-condemning there,

there, he finds his own Conſcience ſtaring him as a Thouſand Witneſſes; thus the Soul of a Believer being environed, he is ready to apprehend, that tho' God ſhould have pardoned the Sins of his Ignorance, yet that there is more Difficulty in this, to pardon his Returnings to Folly, and therefore are ſome put to harder Exerciſe, and greater Terrors after Converſion, than in the Time of it. The Sins of Ignorance being, as it were, removed as a Cloud, and ſcored out in a Heap; but the Sins of Knowledge after Mercy, lying more diſtinctly and clearly in the View of the Soul, it is more difficult to blot them out of the Conſcience, and ſprinkle the Heart from an evil Conſcience: Theſe Things I ſpeak to you for this Reaſon, that you may be afraid to ſin. I ſuppoſe that there is no Hazard of eternal Damnation by Sin, grant that you know before-hand, that if you ſin, there is yet Forgiveneſs with him, and there is no Hazard of periſhing by it; yet, ſure I am, it is the moſt fooliſh Adventure in the World, to take Liberty on that Account; for tho' there be Indemnity that Way, as to thy eternal Eſtate, yet I am perſwaded, that there is more Damage another Way, in thy ſpiritual Eſtate in this World, than all the Gains of Sin can countervail: There is a neceſſary Loſs of Peace, and Joy, and Communion of the *Holy Ghoſt*; it is inevitable in the very ordinary and natural Courſe and Connection of Things, but that Sin, that Way indulged, will eclipſe thy Soul, and bring ſome Darkneſs of Sorrow and Horror over it; to ſpeak after the Manner of Man, and in the Way of Reaſon itſelf, the Entertainment of that which God hates, will deprive thee of more ſolid Joy and Sweetneſs in him, than all the Pleaſures of Sin could afford. Therefore I dare not ſay to you (as One too unadviſedly expreſſeth it) *Fear not, tho' you do ſin, of any Hurt that can come by theſe Sins; for if you ſin, it ſhall do you no Hurt at all*: I ſay, this were indeed but to make you too bold with Sin. I had rather repreſent unto you, that tho' ye be ſecured in your eternal Eſtate, and there can come no Condemnation that Way, yet there is much Hurt comes by Sin, even in this World; and ſure, I think it a very rational and Chriſtian Inducement, to prevail with a Chriſtian not to ſin, to tell him that he ſhall make a fooliſh Bargain by it, for he ſhall looſe much more than he can gain. Is there no Hurt or Loſs incident to Men, but eternal Perdition? Nay, my Beloved, there is a Loſs Chriſtians may ſuſtain by ſinning freely, which all the combined Advantages of Sin cannot compenſe; is not one Hour's Communion with God, is not the Peace of your own Conſciences, and the Joy of the Spirit, ſuch ineſtimable Jewels, that it were more ſuitable for a Man to ſell the World, and buy them, than to ſell them, and buy a poor momentany trifling Contentment, which hath a Sting in the Tail of it, and leaves nothing but Vexation after it? O *theſe Bruiſes in David's Bones, theſe Breaches in his Spirit, that Loſs of the Joy of his Salvation!* let theſe teach you who are eſcaped the great Hurt of Sin, to fear, at leaſt, to be hurt by it this Way, more than ever you can expect to be helped by it.

But then, I deſire to add this in the *third* Place, That there is Proviſion made againſt the Diſcouragement of theſe Souls that deſire not to ſin, and yet ſin againſt their Deſire. If the Challenge I ſpoke of, be written in thy Conſcience, as it were

were with the Point of a Diamond, deeply ingraven; yet my Beloved, consider, *That if any Man sin, we have an Advocate*, &c. There is an express Caution against thy Discouragement; certainly our Saviour hath provided for it; since the Case is so incident, and the Supposition so ordinary, it is not conceivable that he hath not caveated and secured thy Salvation in such Cases: For he knew certainly before he pardoned thee, and visited thee at first, that thou was to be subject unto this necessary Burden of Sin, and that it would oftentimes molest and trouble you, and sometimes prevail over you; all this he knew, that when he should order your Forces, and draw out against Sin, with the greatest Desire and Resolution, that yet you might be foiled unexpectedly; and this was not unknown to him, when he shewed Mercy at first; therefore, since his Love is unchangeable, and his Wisdom (being infinite) saith it should be so, he would never have cast his Love on such Persons, if these Things which were then before him, could make him change. Now, I grant there is more Wonder in the Pardon of following Sins, than in the first Pardon; and therefore you should still love more, and praise more; but what is this Wonder, to the Wonder of his Grace? It is swallowed up in that higher Wonder, *For his Thoughts and Ways are not like ours*, his Voice is, *Return thou back-sliding Sinner to thy first Husband, tho' thou hast played the Harlot.* Therefore, I desire that whatsoever be presented in that Kind, to aggravate your Sins, let it humble you more indeed, and make you hate Sin, but let it not hinder you to think as highly of his Mercy and Grace, and to set that in the Heavens above it.

SERMON XXV.

1 John ii. 1. ——*And if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*, &c.

IT is the natural Office of the Conscience to accuse a Man in Evildoing; as every Man by Sin is liable to the Judgment of the supreme Court of Heaven, so he is likewise subject to the inferior Court of his own Conscience; for the *most high God* hath a Deputy within every Man's Breast, that not only is a Witness, but a Judge, to fasten an Accusation, and pronounce a Sentence upon him according to the Law of God. And while it is so, that a Man is accused in both Courts, at the supreme Tribunal, and the lower House of a Man's own Conscience; when Man's Accuser is within him, and *God his righteous Judge* above him, Who can come in to plead such a Man's Cause

A Perſon ſelf-condemned, who ſhall plead for his Abſolution? If he cannot but accuſe himſelf, and ſtop his Mouth, being guilty before God of the Tranſgreſſions of all his Law, then what place for an Advocate to excuſe him, or defend his Cauſe? And who is it that can enter in the Liſts with God, who, becauſe the ſupreme and higheſt Judge muſt be both Judge and Party? Where ſhall a *Days-Man be found to lay his Hands on both*, and advocate the deſperate-like Cauſe of Sinners? Truly here we had been at an eternal Stand, and here had the Buſineſs ſtuck for ever, for any Thing that the Creation could imagine, had not the *infinite Grace and Wiſdom of God* opened themſelves to Mankind, in opening a Door of Hope to broken and outlaw Sinners; and behold here is the Proviſion made for the Security and Salvation of loſt Souls, *there is One able and mighty to ſave*, a Perſon found out fit for this Advocation, who taketh the broken Cauſe of Sinners in Hand, and pleads it out, and makes out Juſtice to be for them, and not againſt them, *If any Man ſin, we have an Advocate*, &c.

There is one Thing imported, that Sin maketh a Man liable to a Charge and Accuſation, and brings him under the Hazard of Judgment. Indeed, 'tis hard enough to endure an accuſing Conſcience, and a Spirit wounded with the Apprehenſion of Wrath: When our Saviour would expreſs great Affliction, he doth it thus, *A Man's Enemies ſhall be thoſe of his own Houſe*. If a domeſtick Enemy be ſo ill, what ſhall a Boſom-enemy be; when a Man's Accuſer is not only beſide him, but within him, not only in the Houſe with him, but in the Field too, carried about with him whitherſoever he goeth, ſo that he can have no retiring or withdrawing Place from it? Indeed, ſome poor Souls make a mad Eſcape from under the Challenge of their Conſciences; they get away from their Keepers to more Exceſs in Sin, or make ſome vain Diverſion to Company, and other Things of the World; but the End thereof ſhall be more Bitterneſs, for that will not ſtill ſleep within them, but ſhall awake upon them with more Terror, and one Day put them in ſuch a Poſture, that all the Comforts of the World ſhall be but as a Drop of Water to a Man in a burning Fever, or as Oil to a Flame. But, as I told you, that is not the greateſt Matter, to be ſelf-accuſed, and ſelf-condemned, if there were not a higher Tribunal, which this Proceſs originally flows from, *one greater than the Conſcience*, who ſpeaks to us in his Word, and hath written his Charge and Sentence againſt us, and this is it which ſets the Soul moſt on Edge, and it is but the very Apprehenſion of that higher Judgment, which is the Gall and Wormwood, the Poiſon of theſe Challenges in the Conſcience. I would deſire you to look upon this, and conſider that there is a Sentence paſt in the Word of God upon all your Actions, that the Wrath of God is revealed in the Scriptures as due to you, however you may flatter yourſelves in your Sins, and fancy an Immunity from Wrath, tho' you live in Sin. I wiſh ye were once perſuaded of this, that all Sinners muſt once appear before God's Tribunal, and hear the righteous Sentence of the Dueneſs of Puniſhment pronounced; I ſay, all muſt once appear, either to hear and believe it, or to ſee it executed. The Wiſdom of God requires, that all Mens Guilt, which is a *Tranſgreſſion of the Law*, ſhould once come to a judicial Trial and Deciſion by the Law; and either

either this must be done in your own Consciences here, that ye may sift yourselves before him, and take with your Sins, and humble yourselves in his Sight, and then the Matter is put over upon a *Mediator*; or else you must give him leave, nay, he will take leave to cite you to appear, to see the Sentence executed, which was pronounced, since ye would not apply it to your own Hearts. O! happy is that Soul that anticipates that great Day of final Judgment, by a previous Self-judgment and Self-tryal. Well then, hath the Scriptures *included all under Sin, that all Men might be guilty, and every Mouth stopt before God*, Rom. iii. 19. What shall we do then? Since Righteousness and Justice is against us, who can plead for us? It would seem that there could be no relaxing, no repealing, no dispensing with this Law, at least, that if there be any Thing of that Kind, that Righteousness and Judgment can have no Hand in it: Yet, behold what follows, *We have an Advocate*, &c. And an Advocate's Office is to sue out the Client's Right, from Principles of Justice. Elsewhere *Christ* hath the Office of a *Judge*, here he is an Advocate for the Party, and both of these may have a comfortable Consideration: *John* v. 22. *The Father judgeth none, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son.* And yet, here we have an Advocate with the Father, and that is, with the Father as Judge: These do not cross one another, but make out our abundant Consolation, that one intire Office of our *Saviour* is represented under all these various Notions suited to our Capacity. A Judge he is; yea, his Tribunal is the highest and supreme, from which there is no Appeal; the ultimate Decision lies here of all Capital, or Soul Cases or Causes. It is true, the *Father* doth not wholly divest himself of Judgment and Authority in the Matters of Life and Death, for the Gospel is his Contrivance, as it was the *Son's*, but *Christ* is, as it were, substituted his Vicegerent, in the Administration of the second Covenant. You read of a preparatory Tribunal erected in the Word by *God the Creator*, that is, of the Law which condemns us. Now, such is the Mercy and Grace, and free Love of *God*, that he hath relaxed that Sentence as to the Persons, he hath not taken that Advantage which in Justice he had against us; but upon some valuable Considerations hath committed to the *Son* a royal Power of prescribing new Laws of Life and Death, and new Terms of Salvation; and *Christ* having, at his *Father's Will*, satisfied the Law, in what it did threaten us, he is, as it were, in Compensation of such a great Service, *made Lord and King both of the dead and living*, Rom. xiv. 9. And *all Things in Heaven and Earth are given to him*, Mat. xviii. 29. John xiii. 3. And therefore, whatever Soul is aggrieved under the Accusation and Charge of the Law, hath Liberty, yea, and is called to it, of Duty, to appeal unto this new erected Tribunal, where *Christ* sits to dispense Life, according to the Terms of Grace; and he may be sure the *Father* will not judge him according to the Law, if the *Son* absolve him in the Gospel.

Now, with this it consists, that he who hath all final Judgment in his Hand, yet he is our *Advocate* in another Consideration, as we consider *God the Father* sitting upon the Tribunal of Justice, and proceeding according to the Terms and Tenor of his first Law, or Covenant of Life and Death; then *Christ* comes in with his Advocation for poor Sinners,

and ſuſtains their Perſons, and maintains their Cauſe, even from the Principles of Juſtice; he preſents his ſatisfactory Sacrifice, and pleads that we are not to be charged with that Puniſhment that he hath ſuffered, becauſe he hath indeed fulfilled our legal Righteouſneſs; and by this Means the Law's Mouth is ſtop'd, which had ſtop'd our Mouth, and the Sinner is abſolved, who was found guilty. Thus you ſee the Salvation and Abſolution of Believers is wonderfully ſecured, for there is a Sentence for it in the Court of the Goſpel, pronounced by the *Son*. But leſt you think he ſhould uſurp ſuch an abſolute Power, then hear, that he is *an Advocate* to plead out the Equity and Juſtice of it, before the very Tribunal of the Law, that the Law itſelf being the Rule; the *Father* himſelf who made the Law being the Judge, the poor Soul that flies unto him as a Refuge may be ſaved, ſince what it craved of us it gets in him, and is as fully ſatisfied that Way, as it could have been by us: Therefore, that ſame Righteouſneſs which bids condemn the Sinner, commands to ſave the Believer in *Chriſt*, tho' a Sinner. What ſhall a Soul then fear? *who ſhall condemn? it is Chriſt that juſtifieth*, for he is Judge of Life and Death, and that is much; but it is the *Father* that juſtifieth, and that is more: Whatſoever Tribunal you be cited unto, you may be ſure. Is it the Goſpel? then the *Son* is Judge: Is it the Law? then the *Son* is Advocate. He will not only give Life himſelf, but ſee that his *Father* do it, and warrand you from all Back-hazards. Nay, before the Matter ſhall miſgive, as he comes down from off the Throne, to ſtand at the Bar and plead for Sinners, who devolve themſelves upon him, ſo he will not ſpare, if Need require, to degrade himſelf further (if I may ſo ſay) and of an Advocate become a Supplicant. And truly he ceaſed not in the Days of his Fleſh to pray for us, *with ſtrong Cries and Tears*, Heb. vii. *And now he lives ſtill to make Interceſſion for us.* — He can turn from the Plea of Juſtice, to the Interceſſion and Supplication of Mercy, and if ſtrict Juſtice will not help him, yet Grace and Favour he is ſure will not diſappoint him.

There is a divine Contexture of Juſtice and Mercy in the Buſineſs of Man's Redemption; and there is nothing ſo much declares infinite Wiſdom, as the Method, Order, and Frame of it. Mercy might have been ſhewed to Sinners, in gracious and free Pardon of their Sins, and diſpenſing with the Puniſhment due to their Perſons, yet the Lord's Juſtice and Faithfulneſs in that firſt Comminati-on, might be wronged and diſappointed by it, if no Satisfaction ſhould be made for ſuch infinite Offences, if the Law were wholly made void both to the Puniſhment, as alſo to the Perſon: Therefore, in the infinite Deeps of *God's Wiſdom* there was a Way found out to declare both *Mercy* and *Juſtice*, to make both to ſhine glorioufly in this Work; and indeed that is the great Wonder of Men and Angels, ſuch a Conjunction, or Conſtellation of divine Attributes in one Work. And indeed, it is only the moſt happy and favourable Aſpect that we can behold the *divine Majeſty* into. The Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* lxxxv. expects much good from this Conjunction of the celeſtial Attributes, and prognoſticks Salvation to be near Hand, and all good Things, as the immediare Effect of it. There is a Meeting there, as it were, of ſome honourable Perſonages, *Verſe* 10, 11. as are in Heaven: The Meeting is ſtrange,

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if you consider the Parties, *Mercy* and *Truth*, *Righteousness* and *Peace*; if Mercy and Peace had met thus friendly, it had been less Wonder; but it would seem that Righteousness and Truth should stand off, or meet only to reason and dispute the Business with Mercy: But here is the Wonder, *Mercy* and *Truth* meets in a friendly Manner, *and kisseth one a nother*. There's a perfect Agreement and Harmony amongst them, about this Matter of our Salvation. There was a Kind of parting at Man's Fall, but they met again at Christ's Birth; Here is the uniting Principle, *Truth springing out of the Earth*, because he who is *the Truth and the Life*, was to spring out of the Earth, therefore *Righteousness will look down from Heaven*, and countenance the Business, and this will make all of them to meet with a loving Salutation.

Now, as this was the Contexture of the divine Attributes in the Business of Redemption; so *our Lord and Saviour* taketh upon him divers Names, Offices, and Exercises, different Functions for us, because he knoweth that his Father may justly exact of Man personal Satisfaction, and hath him at this Disadvantage, and that he might have refused to have accepted any other Satisfaction from another Person; therefore he puts on the Habit and Form of a Supplicant and Intercessor for us; and so, while he was in the Flesh, *he ceased not to offer up Prayers and Supplications with strong Cries and Tears*; and he is said *still to make Intercession for us*; *as he learned Obedience, tho' a Son, so he learned to be a humble Supplicant, tho' equal with God*; because our Claim depends wholly on Grace, he came off the Bench, and stood at the Bar, not only pleading but praying for us, intreating Favour and Mercy to us; and then, he personates an *Advocate* in another Consideration, and pleads upon Terms of Justice, that we be pardoned, because his *Father* once having accepted him in our Stead, he gave a Satisfaction in Value equal to our Debt, and performed all that we were personally bound to: So then you may understand how it is partly an Act of Justice, partly an Act of Mercy in *God* to forgive Sin to Believers, tho' indeed Mercy and Grace is the predominant Ingredient, because Love and Grace was the very first Rise and Spring of sending a *Saviour and Redeemer*, and so the Original of that very Purchase and Prize. *He freely sent his Son, and freely accepted him in our Stead*; but once standing in our Room, Justice craves that no more be exacted of us, since he hath done the Business himself.

A Sinner stands accused in his own Conscience, and before *God*: Therefore, to the End that we get no Wrong, there is a twofold Advocate given us, one in the Earth, in our Consciences, another in the Heavens with *God*. *Christ* is gone up to the highest Tribunal, where the Cause receives a definitive Sentence, and there he manageth it above; so that tho' Satan should obtrude upon a poor Soul a wrong Sentence in its own Conscience, and bring down a false and counterfeit Act, as it were, extracted out of the Register of Heaven, whereby to deceive the poor Soul, and condemn it in itself; yet there is no Hazard above; he dare not appear there, before the highest Court, for he hath already succumb'd on Earth. When Christ was here, *the Prince of the World was judged and cast out*, and so he will never once put in an Accusation into Heaven, because he knoweth our faithful Advocate is there, where nothing

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can pass without his Knowledge and Consent. And this is a great Comfort that all inferior Sentences in thy perplexed Conscience, which Satan, thro' Violence, hath imposed upon thee, are rescinded above in the highest Court, and shall not stand to thy Prejudice, whoever thou be that desires to forsake Sin, and come to *Jesus Christ*.

But how doth Christ plead? Can he plead us not guilty? Can he excuse, or defend our Sins? No, that is not the Way; that Accusation of the Word and Law against us is confessed, is proven, all is undeniably clear; but he pleads satisfied, tho' guilty; he presents his satisfactory Sacrifice, and the Savour of that perfumes Heaven, and pacifieth all. He shews *God*'s Bond, and Discharge of the Receipt of the Sum of our Debt, and thus is he cleared, and we absolved. Therefore I desire you, whoever you are that are challenged for Sin, and the Transgression of the Law, if ye would have a solid Way of Satisfaction and Peace to your Consciences, take with your Guiltiness; plead not *not guilty*; do not excuse, or extenuate, but aggravate your Guilt; nay, in this you may help Satan, accuse yourselves, and say, that you know more Evil in yourselves than he doth, and open that up before *God*; but in the mean Time consider how it is managed above; plead thou also, satisfied in *Christ*, tho' guilty; and so thou may say to thy Accuser, if thou hast any Thing to object against me, why I may not be saved, tho' a Sinner, thou must go up to the highest Tribunal to propone it, thou must come before my Judge and Advocate above; but, forasmuch as thou dost not appear there, it is but a Lie, and a murdering Lie.

Now, this is the Way that the *Spirit* advocates for us in our Consciences, *John* xiv. and xv. 26. Παράκλητος, it is rendered here *Advocate*, there *Comforter*; both suit well, and may be conjoined in one, and given to both, for both are comfortable Advocates, *Christ* with the Father, and the *Spirit* with us. *Christ* is gone above for it, and he sent the *Spirit* in his Stead. As *God* hath a Deputy-judge in Man, that is, Man's Conscience, so the Son *our Advocate with God*, hath a Deputy-advocate to plead the Cause in our Conscience; and this he doth, partly by opening up the Scriptures to us, and making us understand the Way of Salvation in them, partly manifesting his own Works, and God's Gifts in us, by a superadded Light of Testimony, and partly by comforting us against all outward and inward Sorrows. Sometimes he pleads with the Soul against Satan, *not guilty*, for Satan is a slanderous and a false Accuser, and cares not *calumniari fortiter ut aliquid hæreat*, to calumniate stoutly, and he knoweth something will stick. He will not only object known Sins and Transgressions of the Law, but his Manner is, to cast a Mist upon the Eye of the Soul, and darken all its Graces, and then he brings forth his Process, that they have no Grace, no Faith in Christ, no Love to God, no Sorrow for Sin: In such a Case 'tis the *Spirit*'s Office to plead it out to our Consciences, that we are not totally guilty, as we are charged; and this is not so much a clearing of ourselves, as a Vindication of the free Gifts of *God*, which ly under his Aspersion and Reproach. Indeed, if there be a great Stress here, and for wise Reasons the *Spirit* forbear to plead out this Point, but leave a poor Soul to puddle it out alone, and scrape its Evidences together

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in the Dark: I say, if thou find this too hard for thee to plead *not guilty*; then my Advice is, that ye wave and suspend that Question, yield it not wholly, but rather leave it entire, and do as if it were not. Suppose that Article and Point were gained against thee, what would thou do next? Certainly, thou must say, I would then seek Grace and Faith from Him who giveth liberally, I would then labour to receive *Christ* in the Promises; I say, do that now, and thou taketh a short and compendious Way to win thy Cause, and overcome Satan; let that be thy Study, and he hath done with it.

But in any Challenge about the Transgression of the Law, or Desert of eternal Wrath, the *Spirit* must not plead *not guilty*, for thou must confess that, but in as far as he driveth at a further Conclusion, to drive thee away from Hope and Confidence, to Despondency of Spirit, in so far the *Spirit* clears up unto the Conscience that this doth no ways follow from that Confession of Guiltiness, since there is a *Saviour* that hath satisfied for it, and invites all to come and accept him for their *Lord and Saviour*.

SERMON XXVI.

1 John ii. 1. —— *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.*

THERE is no Settlement to the Spirit of a Sinner that is once touched with the Sense of his Sins, and Apprehension of the Justice and Wrath of *God*, but in some clear and distinct Understanding the Grounds of Consolation in the Gospel, and the Method of Salvation revealed in it. There is no solid Peace-giving Answer to the Challenges of the Law, and thy own Conscience, but in the Advocation of *Jesus Christ, the Saviour of Sinners*; and therefore the Apostle propones it here for the Comfort of Believers, who are incident to be surprized thro' the Suddenness of Sin, and often deceived by the Subtilty of Satan, whose Soul's Desires, and sincere Endeavours are, to be kept from Iniquity; and therefore they are made to groan within themselves, and sometimes sadly to conclude against themselves, upon the prevailing of Sin. Here is the Cordial, I say, he presents to them *Jesus Christ* standing before the Bar of Heaven, and pleading his Satisfaction in the Name of such Souls, and so suiting forth an Exemption and Discharge for them from their Sins; so he presents us with the most comfortable Aspect, *Christ* standing between us and Justice, the *Mediator* interposed between us and the *Father*, so there can come no Harm to such poor Sinners,

Sinners, except it come through his Sides firſt, and no Sentence can paſs againſt them, unleſs he ſuccumb in his righteous Cauſe in Heaven.

The Strength of Chriſt's Advocation for Believers conſiſts partly in his Qualification for the Office, partly in the Ground and Foundation of his Cauſe. His Qualification we have in this Verſe, the Ground and Foundation of his Pleading in the next Verſe, in that *he is a Propitiation for our Sins*, and upon this very Ground his Advocation is both juſt and effectual.

Every Word holds out ſome Fitneſs, and therefore every Word drops out Conſolation to a troubled Soul. [*With the Father,*] ſpeaks out the Relation he and we ſtand in to the Judge; he hath not to do with an auſtere and rigid Judge, that is implacable and unſatisfiable, who will needs adhere peremptorily to the Letter of the Law, for then we ſhould be all undone. If there were not ſome paternal Affection, and fatherly Clemency and Moderation in the Judge, if he were not ſo diſpoſed, as to make ſome candid Interpretation upon it, and in ſome Manner to relax the Sentence, as to our perſonal Suffering, we could never ſtand before him, nor needed any Advocate appear for us: But here is the great Comfort, he is *Chriſt's Father and our Father*, ſo himſelf told us, *John* xx. 17. *I go to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.* And therefore we may be perſuaded that he will not take Advantage, even that he hath in Juſtice of us, and tho' we be apprehenſive of his Anger, in our Failings and Offences, and this makes us often to be both afraid and aſhamed to come to him, meaſuring him after the Manner of Men, who are ſoon angry, and often implacably angry; we imagine that he cannot but repel and put back our Petitions, and therefore we have not the Boldneſs to offer them; yet he ceaſeth not to be *our Father and Chriſt's Father*; and if ye would have the Character of a Father, look *Jer.* xxxi. 18. how he ſtands affected towards aſhamed and confounded *Ephraim, how his Bowels move, and his Compaſſions yearn towards him, as his pleaſant Child.* The Truth is, in ſuch a Caſe in which we are Captives againſt our Will, and ſtumble againſt our Purpoſe, *he pities us as a Father doth his Children*, knowing that we are but Duſt and Graſs, *Pſal.* ciii. 13, 14, 15, 16. 17. See the excellent and ſweet Application of this Relation, by the Pſalmiſt, if it ſtir him, it ſtirs up rather the Affection of Pity, than the Paſſion of Anger: He pities his poor Child, when he cries out of Violence and Oppreſſion. And therefore, there is great Hopes that our Advocate *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhall prevail in his Suits for us, becauſe he, with whom he deals, *the Father*, he loves him, and loves us, and will not ſtand upon ſtrict Terms of Juſtice, but rather attemper all with Mercy and Love. He will certainly hear his *well beloved Son, for in him he is well pleaſed; his Soul reſts and takes Complacency in him*, and for his Sake he adopts us to be his Children; and therefore he will both hear him in our Behalf, and our Prayers too, for his Name's Sake.

But this is ſuperadded to qualify our Advocate, *he is the Chriſt of God*, anointed for this very Purpoſe, and ſo hath a fair and lawful Calling to this Office, *he takes not this Honour to himſelf*, but *was called thereto of his Father*, Heb. v. 4. As he did not make himſelf a *Prieſt*, ſo he did not intrude upon the

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Advocateship, but he that said, Thou art my Son, called him to it. If a Man had never so great Ability to plead in the Law, yet, except he be licentiate and graduate, he may not take upon him to plead a Cause. But *our Lord Jesus* hath both Skill and Authority, he hath both the Ability and the Office, was not a Self-intruder or Usurper, but the Council of Heaven did licentiate him, and graduate him for the whole Office of *Mediatorship:* In which there is the greatest Stay and Support for a sinking Soul, to know that all this Frame and Fabrick of the Gospel was contrived by *God the Father,* and that he is Master-builder in it; since it is so, there can nothing controul it or shake it, since it is the very Will of *God, with whom we have to do,* that a Mediator should stand between him and us: And since he hath such a Mind to clear poor Souls, that he freely chuseth and giveth them an able *Advocate,* it is a great Token that he hath a Mind to save as many as come and submit to him, and that he is ready to pardon, when he prepares so fit an *Advocate* for us, and hath not left us alone to plead our own Cause.

But the anointing of Christ for it, implies both δυναμιν and εξουσιαν, *potentiam & potestatem,* the Gifts for it as well as the Authority, and the Ability as well as the Office; for God hath singularly qualified him for it, *given him the Spirit above Measure,* Isa. lxi. 1. *He received Gifts not only to distribute to Men, but to exercise for Men, and their Advantage,* Psal. lxviii. 18. And therefore the *Father* seems to interess himself in the Cause as it were his own, he furnisheth our *Advocate,* as if it were to plead the Cause of his own Justice against us, *he upholds and strengthens Christ in our Cause, as really as if it were his own,* Isa. xlii. 1, 6. which expresseth to us the admirable Harmony and Consent of Heaven to the Salvation of as many as make Christ their Refuge, and desire not to live in Sin; tho' they be often foiled, yet their is no Hazard of the Failing of their Cause above, because our *Advocate* hath both excellent Skill, and undoubtable Authority.

Yea, he is so fully qualified for this, that he is called *Jesus the Saviour,* he is such an *Advocate,* that he saves all he pleads for. The best Advocate may lose the Cause, either thro' the Weakness of itself, or the Iniquity of the Judge, but he is the *Advocate and the Saviour,* that never succumbed in his Undertaking for any Soul, be their Sins never so hainous, their Accusation never so just and true, their Accuser never so powerful, yet they who put their Cause in his Hand, who flee in hither for Refuge, being wearied of the Bondage of Sin and Satan, he hath such a Prevalency with *the Father,* that their Cause cannot miscarry; even when Justice itself seems to be the opposite Party, yet he hath such marvelous Success in his Office, *that Justice shall rather meet amicably with Mercy and Peace, and salute them kindly,* Psal. lxxxv. 10, 11. as being satisfied by him, than he come short in his Undertaking.

But there is another personal Qualification needful, or all should be in vain, *Jesus the Righteous.* If he were not righteous in himself, he had need of an Advocate for himself, and might not plead for Sinners; but he is *Righteous and Holy, no Guile found in his Mouth, without Sin, an unblameable and unspotted High Priest, else he could not mediate for others, and such an Advocate too, else he could not*

plead for others, Heb. vii. 26. As this perfected his Sacrifice, that he offered not for his own Sins, neither needed he, so this compleats his Advocateship, and gives it a mighty Influence for his poor Clients, that he needs not plead for himself. If then the Law cannot attach our *Lord and Saviour*, can lay no Claim to him, or Charge against him, then certainly all that he did behoved to be for others, and so he stands in a good Capacity to plead for us before the *Father*, and to sue out a Pardon to us, tho' Guilty; *for if the Just was delivered for the Unjust, and the Righteous suffered for the Unrighteous*, much more is it consistent with the Justice of the *Father*, to deliver and save the Unrighteous and unjust Sinner, for the righteous Advocate's Sake. *If ye seek me, then let these go free*, saith he, *John* xviii. 8. So he in Effect pleads with *God his Father, O Father*, if thou deal with me the *righteous One*, as with an unrighteous Man, then, in all Reason and Justice, thou must deal with my poor Clients, tho' unrighteous, as with righteous Men. If Justice thought she did me no Wrong to punish me the *Righteous*, then let it not be thought a Wrong to Justice to pardon, absolve, and justify the Unrighteous.

Now, if he be so righteous a Person, it follows necessarily, that he hath a righteous Cause, for an honest Man will not advocate for an unjust Cause. But, how can the Cause of Believers be said to be Righteous, when Justice itself, and the Law, indicts the Accusation against them? Can they plead *Not guilty?* Or he for them? There is a twofold Righteousness, in relation to a twofold Rule, a Righteousness of strict Justice, in relation to the first Covenant; and this cannot be pleaded, that our Cause is exactly conformable to the Covenant of Works; we cannot, nor *Christ* in our Name, plead any Thing from that, which holds forth nothing but personal Obedience, or else personal Satisfaction. But yet, our Cause may be found to be Righteous, in relation to the second Covenant, and the Rule and Terms of it, in as far as *God* hath revealed his Acceptance of a Surety in our Stead, and hath dispensed with the Rigour of the Law, according to that *new Law of Grace and Righteousness* contempered together. The Cause of a desperate lost Sinner may sustain before the righteous Judge; and it is upon this *new Account* that he pleads for us, because he hath satisfied in our Stead; and now it is as righteous and equitable with *God*, to shew Mercy and Forgiveness to believing Sinners, as it is to reveal Wrath and Anger against impenitent Sinners.

I know there will be some secret Whisperings in your Hearts upon the Hearing of this, Oh! 'tis true, 'tis a most comfortable Thing for them whose Advocate he is; there is no Fear of the Miscarrying of their Cause above; but as for me, I know not if he be an Advocate for me, whether I may come into that Sentence, *We have an Advocate*, &c. I confess it is true, he is not an Advocate for every one, for while he was here, *he prayed not for the World, but them that were given him out of the World*, John xvii. much more will he not plead for the World, when he is above. He is rather witnessing against the unbelieving World. But yet, I believe his Advocation is not restrained only to them that actually believe, as neither his Supplication was, *John* xvii. But as he prayed for them who should hereafter believe, so he still pleads

pleads for all the Elect, not only to procure Remission to the Penitent, but Repentance to the Impenitent. There is one notable Effect of the Advocation and Intercession of *Christ*, which indeed is common to the World, but particularly intended for the Elect, that is, the present Suspension of the Execution of the Curse of the Law, by Virtue whereof there is Liberty to offer the Gospel, and call Sinners to Repentance. No Question, the Sparing of the World, the Forbearance and Long-suffering of God toward Sinners, is the Result and Fruit of our *Lord's Intercession and Advocation in Heaven*, and so even the Elect have the Benefit of it before they believe; but it is so provided, that they shall never sensibly know this, nor have any special Comfort from it, till they believe, and so Christ doth not plead for Pardon to their Sins till they repent. He pleads even before we repent, but we cannot know it, yet he pleads not that Pardon be bestowed before they repent, and so the saving Efficacy of his Advocation is peculiar and proper in the Application to believing Souls.

Now, consider (I say) whether or not thou be one that finds the Power of that Persuasion, *My little Children, I write to you that ye sin not*, &c. Can thou unfeignedly say, that 'tis the Desire and Endeavour of thy Soul *not to sin*, and that thou art persuaded to this, not only from the Fear and Terror of God, but especially from his Mercy and Goodness in the Gospel; this is one Part of the Character of such as Christ's Advocation is actually extended to. Moreover, being surprized with Sin, and overcome beside thy Purpose, and against thy Desire, dost thou apprehend Sin as thy greatest Misery, and arraign thyself before the Tribunal of *God*, or art thou attached in thy own Conscience, and the Law pleaded against thee, before the Bar of thy own Conscience; then, I say, according to this Scripture, thou art the Soul unto whom this Comfort belongs, thou art called *of God* to decide the Controversy in thy own Conscience, by flying up, and appealing to that higher Tribunal, where *Christ is Advocate*, thou may safely give over, and trust thy Cause to him.

But on the other Hand, O, how deplorable and irremediless is the Condition of these Souls who have no Cause of this Kind stated within their own Conscience, who are not pursued by Satan and Sin, but rather at Peace with them, amicably agreeing with them, acting their Lusts and Will. You who have no Bonds upon you, to restrain you from Sin, *neither the Terror of the Lord persuadeth you, nor the Love of Christ constrains you*; you can be kept from no beloved Sin, nor pressed to any serious and spiritual Labour in *God's* Service, and then, when you sin, you have no Accuser within, or such an one as you suppress, and suffers not to plead it out against you, or cite you before God's Tribunal. I say unto you, and alas! many of you are such, you do not, you cannot know, that you have an Interest in this Advocate. You can have no Benefit nor saving Advantage from Christ's Pleading, while you remain thus in your Sins. Alas! poor Souls, what will ye do? Can you manage your own Cause alone? Though you defraud and deceive your own Consciences now, tho' ye offer Violence to them, do ye think so to carry it above? Nay, persuade yourselves, you must one Day appear, and none to speak for you; *God* your Judge, your Conscience your Accuser, and Satan your

Tormentor ſtanding by; and then, Woe to him that is alone, when the Advocate becomes Judge; in that Day bleſt are all thoſe that have truſted in him, and uſed him formerly as an Advocate againſt Sin and Satan: But Woe to them for ever, who would never ſuffer this Cauſe to be pleaded, while there was an Advocate.

SERMON XXVII.

1 John ii. 2. *And he is the Propitiation*, &c.

HERE is the Strength of Chriſt's Plea, and Ground of his Advocation, *that he is the Propitiation*. The Advocate is the Prieſt, and the Prieſt is the Sacrifice; and ſuch Efficacy this Sacrifice hath, that the Propitiatory-ſacrifice may be called the very *Propitiation*, and *Pacification* for Sin. Here is the Marrow of the Goſpel, and theſe are the Breaſts of Conſolation, which any poor Sinner might draw by Faith, and bring out Soul-refreſhment: But truly, it comes not out, but by drawing, and there is nothing fit for that but the Heart, that alone can ſuck out of theſe Breaſts the Milk of Conſolation. The Well of Salvation in the Word is deep, and many of you have nothing to draw with, you want the Bucket that ſhould be let down, that is, the affectionate Meditation and Conſideration of the Heart; and therefore, you go away empty. You come full of other Cares, and Deſires, and Delights, no empty Room in your Hearts for this, no Soul-longings, and Thirſtings after the *Righteouſneſs of God*; and therefore, you return as you came, empty of all ſolid and true Refreſhment. Oh, that we could draw it forth to you, and then drop it into your Hearts, and make it deſcend into your Conſciences.

In theſe Words, you may conſider more diſtinctly, who this is, and then, for whom he is made a Sacrifice, and withal, the Efficacy of this Sacrifice, and the Sufficiency. Who is this, is pointed out as with the Finger, (*He is*) that is, *Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous*. The Apoſtle demonſtrates him as a remarkable Perſon, as in his Evangel, *the Baptiſt* doth. *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sins of the World*. And the Church, *Iſa.* lxiii. 1. taketh a ſpecial Notice of this Perſon. *Who is this that cometh from Edom?* And that which maketh him ſo remarkable, is his ſtrange Habit, *after the treading the Wine-preſs of Wrath alone*, that he was made a bloody Sacrifice to pacify God; and to ſhew you how notable a Perſon he is, he is ſignally and eminently pointed out by the Father, *Iſa.* xlii. 1. *Behold my Servant*, &c. as if he would have the Eyes of all Men fixed upon him, with Wonder and Admiration; and for this End, he ſingled him out from the Multitude, by a Voice from Heaven, which teſtified unto him particularly,

ticularly, *This is my well beloved Son, hear him.* Therefore the Apostle had Reason to say, 2 *Cor.* v. 14. That he is *One for all*, so notable an One, that he may serve for all. He stands in more Value in the Count of *God*, than all Mankind. All Creatures are Cyphers, which being never so much multiplied come to nothing, amount not beyond nothing, but set him before them, put *Christ* on the Head of them, and he signifies more than they all do, and gives them all some Estimation in the Count. And so they stand in *Paul*'s Calculation, *Phil.* iii. which he makes with very great Assurance and Confidence, *Yea, doubtless I count all Dung, but the superexcellent Knowledge of Christ. Christ is* only the Figure that hath Signification, and gives Signification to other Things.

But in this Business, the Consideration of the Persons interessed, (*he* and *us*) maketh us behold a great Emphasis in the Gospel; *He a Propitiation, and that for our Sins*, is a strange Combination of Wonders. If it had been some other Person less distant from us, that were thus given for us, and standing in our Room, then we should have better understood the Exchange. Things of like Worth, to be thus shufled together, and stand in one anothers Place, is not so strange: But between the Persons mentioned, *him* and *us*, there is such an infinite Distance, that it is wonderful, how the one descends to the Room of the other, to become a Sacrifice for us. O, that we could express this to our own Hearts, with all the Emphasis that it hath; *He the Lord*, and *we* the Servants; *he the King*, and *we* the poor Beggars; *he the Brightness of his Father's Glory*, and we the Shame and Ignominy of the whole Creation; *he counting it no Robbery to be equal with God, and being in the Form of God*, and *we* not equal to the worst of Creatures because of Sin, and being in the Form of Devils. Had it been a holy and righteous Man for Sinners, it had been a strange enough Exchange; but *he* is not only *holy* and *harmless*, but *higher than the Heavens*. O, what a vast Descent was this, from Heaven to Earth, from a Lord to a Servant, from an eternal Spirit to mortal Flesh, from God to Creatures; and to descend thus far for such Persons, not only unworthy in themselves, such as could not conciliate any Liking, but such as might procure Loathing, as is described, *Ezek.* xvi. and *Rom.* v. 6. and 1 *Pet.* iii. 18. *While we were Enemies*, and might have expected a Commissioner from Heaven, with Vengeance against us. Behold, how the mysterious Design of Love breaks up, and opens itself to the World, *in sending his own Son for us*; and this is exceedingly aggravated from the absolute Freedom of it, that there was nothing to pre-ingage him to it, but infinite Impediments in the Way to dissuade him; many Impediments of his Affection, and many Difficulties to his Power, and then, no Gain nor Advantage to be expected from such Creatures, notwithstanding of such an Undertaking for them.

Now, herein is the strongest Support of Faith, and the greatest Incentive to Love, and the mightiest Perswasive to Obedience that can be. I say, the strongest Support of Faith; for, a Soul apprehending the Greatness and Hainousness of Sins, and the Inviolableness of *God*'s Righteousness, with the Purity of his Holiness, can hardly be perswaded, that

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any Thing can compenſe that infinite Wrong that is done to his Majeſty, tho' ordinarily the ſmall and ſuperficial Apprehenſion of Sin, makes a kind of Facility in this, or an empty Credulity of the Goſpel. The Reaſon why moſt Men do not queſtion and doubt of the Goſpel, and of their Acceptance before *God*, is not becauſe they are eſtabliſhed in the Faith, but rather becauſe they do not ſo ſeriouſly and deeply believe, and ponder their own Sins, and *God*'s Holineſs; which if many did, they would find it a greater Difficulty to attain to a ſolid and quieting Perſwaſion of the Grounds of the Goſpel: They would find much ado to ſettle that Point of the Readineſs of *God*, to pardon and accept Sinners. But now, I ſay, all this Difficulty, and theſe Clouds of Doubts will evaniſh at the bright Appearance of this *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, that is, at the ſolid Conſideration of the glorious Excellency of him that was given a Ranſom for us: Herein the Soul may be ſatisfied, that *God* is ſatisfied, when he conſiders what a Perſon hath undertaken it, *even Jeſus the Righteous, the only Son of God, in whom his Soul delighteth*, whoſe glorious divine Majeſty puts the Stamp of infinite Worth upon all his Sufferings, and raiſeth up the Dignity of the Sacrifice, beyond the Sufferings of all Creatures: For there are two Things needful, for the full Satisfaction of a troubled Soul, that apprehends the Hainouſneſs of Sin, and Height of Wrath; nothing can calm and ſettle this Storm, but the Appearance of two Things; *Firſt*, of *God*'s Willingneſs and Readineſs to pardon Sin, and ſave Sinners; *Next*, of the Anſwerableneſs of a Ranſom to his Juſtice, that ſo there may be no Impediment in his Way to forgive. Now, let this once be eſtabliſhed in thy Heart, that ſuch an One, ſo beloved of *God*, and ſo equal to *God*, is the Propitiation for our Sins, that *God hath ſent his only begotten Son*, for this very Buſineſs, unrequired and unknown of us; then, there is the cleareſt Demonſtration of theſe two Things, that can be, *of the Love of God*, and *of the Worth of the Ranſom*. What Difficulty can be ſuppoſed in it, actually to pardon thy hainous Sins, when his Love hath overcome infinite greater Difficulties, *to ſend One, his own Son to procure Pardon*, John iii. Certainly, it cannot but be the very Delight of his Heart to forgive Sins, *ſince he ſpared not his Son* to purchaſe it; ſince he hath had ſuch an everlaſting Deſign of Love, which broke out in *Chriſt*'s coming; and then, ſuch a Perſon he is, that the Merit of his Sufferings, cannot but be a valuable and ſufficient Compenſation to Juſtice, for our perſonal Exemption, becauſe he is *One above all, of infinite Highneſs*; and therefore his Lowneſs hath an infinite Worth in it, *of infinite Fulneſs*, and therefore his Emptineſs is of infinite Price, *of infinite Glory*, and ſo his Shame is equivalant to the Shame and Malediction of all Mankind: So then, whatſoever thou apprehend of thy own Sins, or *God*'s Holineſs, that ſeemeth to render thy Pardon difficult; lay but in the Ballance with that, *firſt*, the free and rich Expreſſion of the infinite Love of God, in ſending ſuch an One for a Ranſom; and ſure, that ſpeaks as much to his Readineſs and Willingneſs, as if a Voice ſpake it juſt now from Heaven: And then, to take away all Scruple, lay the infinite Worth of his Perſon, who is *the Propitiation*, with thy Sins, and it will certainly out-weigh them; ſo that thou may be fully quieted, and ſatisfied in that Point, that

that it is as easy for him to pardon, as for thee to confess Sin, and ask Pardon; nay, that he is more ready to give it thee, than thou to ask it.

But in the *next* Place, I desire you to look upon this, as the greatest Incentive of Affection: O, how should it inflame your Hearts to consider, that such an One became a Sacrifice for our Sins; to think that Angels hath not such a Word to comfort themselves withal; these innumerable Companies of Angels, who left their Station, and were once in Dignity above us, hath not such glad Tidings to report one to another in their Societies, as we have; they cannot say, *he is the Propitiation for our Sins.* This is the wonderful Mystery, *that blessed Angels desire to look into*, they gaze upon it, and fix the Eyes of their Admiration *upon God manifested in the Flesh*, wondering at the Choice of mortal Man, before immortal Spirits, that he is a Ransom for them, and not for their own Brethren who left their Station; how should this endear him to our Souls, and his Will to our Hearts, *Who hath so loved us, and given himself for us*; hath he given himself for us, and should we deny ourselves to him, especially when we consider what an infinite Disparity is between the Worth, and Difference in the Advantage of it: He gave his blessed self *a Sacrifice*, he offered himself to Death for us, not to purchase any Thing to himself, but Life to us, and what is it he requires? but your base and unworthy self, to offer up your Lusts and Sins in a Sacrifice by Mortification, and your Hearts and Affections in a Thanksgiving-offering, wherein your own greatest Gain lyes too; for this is truly to find and save yourselves, thus to quit yourselves to him.

The Efficacy of this is holden out in the Word, *Propitiation for our Sins*; the Virtue of Christ's Sacrifice is to pacify Justice, and make *God* propitious, that is, favourable and merciful to Sinners; In which there are three considerable Things imported; one is, that Sin is the Cause of Enmity between God and Man, and sets us at an infinite Distance, that Sin is a hainous Provocation of his Wrath; another is expressed, that *Christ is the Propitiation*, in Opposition to that Provocation, he pacifies Wrath, and then conciliates Favour, by the Sacrifice of himself: All the Expressions of the Gospel import the damnable and deplorable Estate that Sin puts Man into, *Reconciliation* imports the standing Enmity and Feud between God and Man; *Propitiation* imports the Provocation of the holy and just Indignation of *God* against Man, the Fewel whereof is our Sins: *Justification* implies the lost and condemned Estate of a Sinner, under the Sentence and Curse of the Law; all that is in the Gospel minds us of our Original, of the forlorn Estate he found us into, none pitying us, nor able to help us. I would desire that this might first take Impression on your Hearts, that Sin sets *God and Man* at infinite Distance; and not only Distance, but Disaffection and Enmity: It hath sown the Seeds of that woful Discord, and kindled that Contention, which if it be not quenched by *the Blood of Christ*, will burn to everlasting, so that none can dwell with it, and yet Sinners must dwell in it; there is a provoking Quality in it, fit to alienate the holy Heart of *God*, and to incense his Indignation, which when once it is kindled, *who can stand before it?* Do but consider what you conceive of Wrongs done to you, how they stir your Passions

sions, and provoke your Patience, so that there is much ado to get you pacified; and what Hainousness must then be in your Offences against *God*, both in regard of Number and Kind? Oh, that you could but impartially weigh this Matter, you would find, that in the View of *God*, all Wrongs and Injuries between Men evanish. *Against thee alone have I sinned*; that Relation and Respect of Sin to *God*, exhausts all other Respects of Injuries towards Men. It is true, that his *Majesty* is free from Passion, and is not commoved and troubled as your Spirits are; yet such is the provoking Nature of Sin, that it cries for Vengeance, and brings a Sinner under the dreadful Sentence of divine Wrath, which he both pronounceth, and can execute without any inward Commotion or Disturbance of Spirit: But, because we conceive of him after our Manner, therefore he speaks in such Terms to us. But that which he would signify by it, is that the Sinner is in as dreadful and damnable a Condition by Sin, as if the *Lord* were mightily inflamed with Anger and Rage; the just Punishment is as due and certain, as if he were subject to such Passions as we are; and so much the more certain, that he is not. Now, I desire you to consider, how mightily the Hainousness of Sin is aggravated, partly by the Quality of the Persons, and partly by the Consideration of his Benefits to us. A great Man resents a light Wrong heavily, because his Person makes the Wrong heavier. O, what do you think the *most High* should do, considering his infinite Distance from us, his glorious Majesty and Greatness, his pure Holiness, his absolute Power and Supremacy? What vile and abominable Characters of Presumption and Rebellion do all these imprint upon Disobedience? Shall he suffer himself to be despised and neglected of Men, when there is no petty Creature above another, but he will be jealous of his Credit, and vindicate himself from Contempt? And then, when Ingratitude is mingled in with Rebellion, it makes Sin exceeding sinful; and sinful Sin exceeding provoking, to proclaim open War against the holy and righteous Will of him whom we owe ourselves to, and all that we are, or have; to do Evil, because he is good, and be unthankful, because he is kind, to take all his own Members, Faculties, Creatures, and imploy them as Instruments of Dishonour against himself, there is here Fewel for feeding everlasting Indignation; there is no Indignity, no Vileness, no Wickedness to this; all the Provocations of Men, how just soever, are in the Sight of this groundless and vain, like a Child's Indignation; all are but imaginary Injuries, consisting but in Opinion, in regard of that which Sin hath in the Bosom of it against God.

But, how shall any Satisfaction be made for the Injury of Sin? What shall pacify his justly deserved Anger? Here is the Question indeed, that would have driven the whole World to a *Nonplus*, if once the Majesty and Holiness of *God* had been seen: But the Ignorance of God's Greatness, and Mens Sinfulness, made the World to fancy some Expiations of Sin, and Satisfactions to *God*, partly by Sacrifices of Beasts, partly by Prayer, and Repentance for Sins.

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SERMON XXVIII.

1 John ii. 3. *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.*

THIS Age pretends to much Knowledge, beyond former Ages; Knowledge, I say, not only in other natural Arts and Sciences, but especially in Religion; whether there be any great Advancement in other Knowledge, and Improvement of that which was to a further Extent and Clearness, I cannot judge; but, I believe, there is not much of it in this Nation, nor do we so much pretend to it. But, we talk of the Inlargements of divine Knowledge, and the breaking up of a clearer Light in the Point of Religion, in Respect of which, we look on former Times, *as the Times of Ignorance and Darkness, which God winked at.* If it were so indeed, I should think the Time happy, and bless the Days we live into, for as many sour and sad Accidents as they are mixed withal. Indeed, if the Variety of Books, and Multiplicity of Discourses upon Religion; if the Multitude of Disputes about Points of Truth, and Frequency of Sermons, might be held for a sufficient Proof of this Pretension, we should not want Store enough of Knowledge and Light. But, I fear that this is not the Touch-stone of the *Holy Ghost*, according to which we may try the Truth of this Assertion; that this is not the Rule, by which to measure either the Truth, or Degrees of our Knowledge; but for all that, we may be lying buried in *Egyptian* Darkness; and while such a Light seems to shine about us, our Hearts may be a Dungeon of Darkness, of Ignorance of God and Unbelief, and our Ways and Walk full of Stumblings in the Darkness. I am led to entertain these sad Thoughts of the present Times, from the Words of the Apostle, which gives us the Designation of a true Christian, to be the Knowledge of God, and the Character of his Knowledge, to be Obedience to his Commands; if according to this Level, we take the Estimate of the Proportion of our Knowledge and Light, I am afraid lest there be found as much Ignorance of God, and Darkness, as we do foolishly fancy that we have of Light. However, to find it, will be some breaking up of Light in our Hearts; and to discover how little we know indeed upon a solid Account, will be the first Morning-Star of that *Sun of Righteousness, which will shine more and more to the perfect Day.* Therefore we shall labour to bring our Light to the Lamp of this Word, and our Knowledge to this Testimony of unquestionable Authority, that having Recourse *to the Law and the Testimony,*

we may find if there be Light in us, or ſo much Light as Men think they ſee; If we could but open our Eyes to the ſhinning Light of this Scripture, I doubt not, but we ſhould be able to ſee that which few do ſee, that is, that much of the pretended Light of this Age, is Darkneſs and Ignorance. I do not ſpeak of Errors only, that come forth in the Garments of new Light, but eſpecially of the vulgar Knowledge of the Truth of Religion, which is far adulterated from the true Mettal and Stamp of divine Knowledge, by the Intermixture of the groſs Darkneſs of our Affections and Converſation, as that other is from the naked Truth; and therefore both of them are found light in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, and counterfeit by this Touch-ſtone of Obedience.

To make out this Examination the better, I ſhall endeavour to open theſe three Things unto you, which comprehend the Words; *1ſt*, That the Knowledge of *God in Jeſus Chriſt*, is the moſt proper Deſignation of a Chriſtian; *hereby we know that we know him*, which is as much as to ſay, that we are true Chriſtians. *2dly*, That the proper Character of true Knowledge, is Obedience, or conſcionable practiſing of what we know; And then, *laſtly*, That the only Eſtimate or Trial of our Eſtate before God, is made according to the Appearance of his Work in us, and not by immediate thruſting ourſelves into the Secrets of God's hidden Decrees, *Hereby we know*, &c. Here then in a narrow Circle we have all the Work and Buſineſs of a Chriſtian; his direct and principal Duty is, to know God, and keep his Commands, which are not two diſtinct Duties, as they come in a religious Conſideration, but make up one complete Work of Chriſtianity, which conſiſts in Conformity to God. Then the reflex and ſecondary Duty of a Chriſtian, which makes much for his Comfort, is, *to know that he knows God*: *To know God, and keep his Commands*, is a Thing of indiſpenſible Neceſſity to the Being of a Chriſtian, *to know that we know him*, is of great Concernment, to the Comfort and Well-being of a Chriſtian; without the firſt, a Man is as miſerable as he can be, without the Senſe and Feeling of Miſery, becauſe he wants the Spring and Fountain of all Happineſs; without the ſecond, a Chriſtian is unhappy indeed for the preſent, tho' he may not be called miſerable, becauſe he is more happy than he knows of, and only unhappy, becauſe he knows not his Happineſs.

For the *firſt* then, Knowledge is a Thing ſo natural to the Spirit of a Man, that the Deſire of it is reſtleſs and unſatiable; there is ſome Appetite of it in all Men, tho' in the Generality of People (becauſe of Immerſedneſs in earthly Things, and the Predominancy of corrupt Luſts and Affections, which hinder moſt Mens Souls to wait upon that more noble Inquiry after Knowledge, in which only a Man really differs from a Beaſt) there be little or no ſtirring that Way; yet ſome finer Spirits there are, that are unquiet this Way, and with *Solomon*, give themſelves, and apply their Hearts to ſearch out Wiſdom. But this is the Curſe of Man's Curioſity at firſt, in ſeeking after unneceſſary Knowledge, when he was happy enough already, and knew as much of *God* and his Works, as might have been a moſt ſatisfying Entertainment of his Spirit; I ſay, for that wretched Aim, we are to this Day deprived of that Knowledge which Man once had, which was the Ornament of his

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Nature, and the Repast of his Soul; as all other Things are subdued under a Curse for Sin, so especially this which Man had is lost, in seeking that which he needed not; and the Tract of it is so obscured and perplexed, the Footsteps of it are so undiscernable, and the Way of it is like a Bird in the Air, or a Ship in the Sea, leaving us few Helps to find it out, that most Part of Men loose themselves in seeking to find it; and therefore, in all the Inquiries and Searchings of Men, after the Knowledge even of natural Things that come under our View, there is at lenght nothing found out remarkable, but the Increase of Sorrow, and the Discovery of Ignorance, as *Solomon* saith, *Eccles.* i. 18. This is all the Jewel that is brought up from the Bottom of this Sea, when Men dive deepest into it; for the wisest of Men could reach no more, tho' his Bucket was as long as any Mans, *Chap.* vii. 23. *I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me; that which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?* Knowledge hath taken a far Journey from Man's Nature, and hath not left any Prints behind it to find it out again, but, as it were, hath flown away in an Instant, and therefore, we may ask with *Job*, Chap. xxviii. Ver. 1. 12. *Surely, there is a Vein for the Silver*, &c. *But where shall Wisdom be found? and where is the Place of Understanding?* What *Utopian* Isles is she transported unto? that mortal Men, the more they seek her, they find more Ignorance, the further they pursue, they see themselves at the further Distance; thus it is in these Things that are most obvious to our Senses, but how much more in spiritual and invisible Things is our Darkness increased, because of the Dulness and Earthiness of our Spirits, that are clogged with a Lump of Flesh; for *God himself*, that should be the *primum intelligibile* of the Soul, the first and principal Object, whose glorious Light should first strike into our Hearts. *Job* testifies *how little a Portion is known of him*, when we cannot so much as understand *the Thunder of his Power*, that makes such a sensible Impression on our Ears, and makes all the World to stand and hearken to it; then how much less shall we conceive the invisible Majesty of God? In natural Things, we have one Vail of Darkness in our Minds to hinder us; but in the Apprehension of *God*, we have a twofold Darkness to break through, the Darkness of Ignorance in us, and the Darkness of too much Light in him. *Caliginem nimiæ lucis*, which makes him as inaccessible to us as the other; the Over-proportion of that glorious Majesty of God to our low Spirits, being as the Sun in its Brightness, to a Night-owl, which is dark Mid-night to it. Hence is it, that these holy Men who know most of *God*, think they know least, because they see more to be known, but infinitely surpassing Knowledge. Pride is the Daughter of Ignorance only, and *he that thinketh he knoweth any Thing, knoweth nothing as he ought to know*, saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* viii. 2. For he that knoweth not his own Ignorance, if he know never so much, is the greatest Ignorant; and it is a manifest Evidence that a Man hath but a superficial Touch of Things, and hath never broken the Shell, or drawn by the Vail of his own Weakness and Ignorance, that doth not apprehend deeply, the *Unsearchableness of God*, and his Mysteries; but thinketh he hath in some Measure compassed them, because he maketh a System of Divinity,

or ſetteth down ſo many Concluſions of Faith, and can debate them againſt Adverſaries, or becauſe he hath a Form and Model of Divinity, as of other Sciences in his Mind. Nay, my Beloved, holy *Job* attained to the deepeſt and fulleſt Speculation of *God*, when he concluded this, *becauſe I ſee thee, I abhor myſelf*; and as *Paul* ſpeaks, *If any Man love God, he is known of God, and ſo knows God*, 1 Cor. viii. 3. From which two Teſtimonies I conclude, that the true Knowledge of God, conſiſts not ſo much in a Comprehenſion of all Points of Divinity, as in ſuch a ſerious Apprehenſion and Conception of the divine Majeſty, as inkindles and inflames theſe two Affections, *Love and Hatred*, towards their proper Objects; ſuch a Knowledge as carries the Torch before the Affection; ſuch *a Light as ſhines into the Heart*, as *Paul's* Phraſe is, 2 *Cor.* iv. 6. and ſo tranſmits Heat and Wantonneſs into it, till it make the Heart burn in the Love of God, and loathing of himſelf; as long as a Man doth but hear of God in Sermons, or read of him in Books, tho' he could determine all the Queſtions and Problems in Divinity, he keeps a good Conceit of himſelf, and *that Knowledge puffeth up*, and ſwells a Man into a vain Tumor, the Venom of Poiſon blows him up full of Wind and Self-confidence; and commonly they who doubt leaſt, are not the freeſt of Error and Miſapprehenſion: And truly, whoever ſeriouſly reflects upon the Difficulty of Knowledge, and Darkneſs of Mens Minds, and the general Curſe of Vanity, and Vexation that all Things are under, ſo that what is wanting cannot be numbred, nor that which is crooked made ſtraight; he cannot but look upon too great Confidence and Peremptorineſs in all Points, as upon a Race at full ſpeed in the dark Night, in a Way full of Pits and Snares; oftentimes our Confidence flows not from Evidence of Truth, but the Ignorance of our Minds, and is not ſo much built upon the Strength of Reaſon, as the Strength of our Paſſions, and Weakneſs of our Judgments.

But when once a Man comes to ſee *God*, and know him in a lively Manner, then he ſees his own Weakneſs and Vileneſs in that Light, and cries out with *Iſaiah*, *Wo is me, I am a Man of polluted Lips*; and he diſcerns in that Light, the Amiableneſs and Lovelineſs *of God*, that raviſheth his Heart after it; and then, as *Jeremiah* ſaith, *He will not glory in Riches, or Strength, or Beauty, or Wiſdom*, but only in this, that he hath at length gotten ſome Diſcovery of the only Fountain of Happineſs; then he will not think ſo much of Tongues and Languages, of Prophecyings, of all Knowledge of Controverſies, neither Gifts of Body nor of Mind, nor external Appendancies of Providence will much affect him; he would be content to trample on all theſe, to go over them into a fuller Diſcovery and Enjoyment of God himſelf.

If we ſearch the Scriptures, we ſhall find that they do not entertain us with many and ſubtile Diſcourſes of *God's Nature, and Decrees and Properties*, nor do they inſiſt upon the many perplexed Queſtions, that are made concerning *Chriſt* and his Offices, about which ſo many Volumes are ſpun out, to the infinite Diſtraction of the Chriſtian World; they do not pretend to ſatisfy your Curioſity, but to edify your Souls; and therefore they hold out *God in Chriſt*, as cloathed with all his Relations to Mankind, in all theſe plain and eaſy

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Properties, that concerns us everlastingly, his Justice, Mercy, Grace, Patience, Love, Holiness, and such like. Now, hence I gather, That the true Knowledge of God, consists not in the Comprehension of all the Conclusions that are deduced, and Controversies that are discussed anent these Things, but rather, in the serious and solid Apprehension of *God*, as he hath Relation to us, and consequently in Order and Reference to the moving of our Hearts, to love, and adore, and reverence him, for he is holden out only, in these Garments that are fit to move and affect our Hearts. A Man may know all these Things, and yet not know *God himself*; for to know him, cannot be abstracted from loving of him, *They that know thy Name will trust in thee, and so love thee, and so fear thee*; for 'tis impossible but that this will be the natural Result, if he be but known indeed, because there is no Object more amiable, more dreadful withal, and more eligible and worthy of Choice; and therefore, seeing infinite Beauty and Goodness, and infinite Power and Greatness, and infinite Sufficiency and Fulness, are combined together with infinite Truth, the Soul that apprehends him indeed, cannot but apprehend him as the most ravishing Object, and the most reverend too; and, if he do not find his Heart suitably affected, it is an evident Demonstration, that he doth not indeed apprehend him but an Idol. The infinite Light, and the infinite Life, are simply one, and he that truly without a Dream sees the one, cannot but be warmed and moved by the other.

So then, by this Account of the Knowledge of God, we have a clear Discovery that many are destitute of it, who pretend to it. I shall only apply it to two Sorts of Persons, one is, of them who have it only in their Memories, another, of them who have it only in their Minds or Heads. Religion was once the ligitimate Daughter of Judgment and Affection, but now, for the most Part, it is only adopted by Mens Memories, or Fancies; the greatest Part of the People, cannot go beyond the Repetition of the Catechism or Creed, not that I would have you to know more: But you do not understand that, only ye repete Words, without the sensible Knowledge of the Meaning of it; so that, if the same Matter be disguised with any other Form of Words, you cannot know it, which sheweth, that you have no Familiarity with the Thing itself, but only with the Letters and Syllables that are the Garments of it. And for others that are of greater Capacity, yet alas, it comes not down to the Heart, to the affecting and moulding and forming of it; a little Light shines into the Mind, but your Hearts are shut up still, and no Window in them: Corrupt Affections keep that Garrison against the Power of the Gospel, that Light hath no Heat of Love, or Warmness of Affection with it, which sheweth, that it is not a Ray or Beam of the *Sun of Righteousness*, which is both beautiful for Light, and beneficial for Influence, on the cold and dead frozen Hearts of Mankind, and by its approaching, makes a Spring-time in the Heart.

But all Men pretend to know *God*, such is the Self-love of Mens Hearts, that it makes them blind in judging themselves; therefore, the *Holy Ghost*, as he designs a Christian by the Knowledge of *God*, so he characterizeth Knowledge by keeping the *Commandments*; *hereby we know*, &c. So that Religion is not defined by a Number of Opinions, or by such

ſuch a certain Collection of ſuch Articles of Faith, but rather by Practice and Obedience to the known Will of *God*; for, as I told you, Knowledge is a relative Duty, that is inſtrumental to ſome Thing elſe, and by any Thing I can ſee in Scripture, is not principally intended for itſelf, but rather for Obedience: There are ſome Sciences altogether ſpeculative, that reſt and are complete in the mere Knowledge of ſuch Objects, as ſome natural Sciences are. But others are practical, that make a further Reference of all Things they cognoſce upon, to ſome Practice and Operation. Now, perhaps ſome may think that the Scripture, or Divinity, is much of it meerly contemplative, in regard of many Myſteries infolded in it, that ſeem nothing to concern our Practice. I confeſs much of that, that is raiſed out of the Scriptures, is ſuch, and therefore it ſeems a Deviation and Departure from the great Scope and plain Intent of the Simplicity and Eaſineſs of the Scriptures, to draw forth with much Induſtry and Subtility, many Things of mere Speculation and Notion, dry and ſapleſs to the Affection, and unedifying to our Practice, and to obtrude theſe upon other Mens Conſciences, as Points of Religion. I rather think, that all that is in the Scriptures, either directly hath the Practice of God's Will for the Object of it, or is finally intended for that End; either it is a Thing that preſcribeth our Obedience, or elſe it tends principally to ingage our Affections, and ſecure our Obedience; and ſo theſe Strains of elevate Diſcourſes of God, his Nature, and Properties of his Works, and all the Myſteries infolded in it, are directed towards this End, further than mere knowing of them, to ingage the Heart of a Believer to more Love and Reverence, and Adoration of *God*, that ſo he may be brought more eaſily and ſteadily to a ſweet Complyance, and harmonious Agreement to the Will of God, in all his Ways. Nay, to ſay a little more, there are ſundry phyſical or natural Contemplations of the Works of God in Scripture, but all theſe are divinely conſidered, in Reference to the Raviſhment of the Heart of Man, with the Wiſdom and Power and Goodneſs of *God*; and this ſhews us the notable Art of Religion, to extract Affection and Obedience to *God*, out of all natural Contemplations; and thus true Divinity ingraven on the Soul, is a Kind of Miſtreſs-ſcience, *arthitectonica ſcientia*, that ſerves itſelf of all other Diſciplines, of all other Points of Knowledge, be they never ſo remote from Practice, in their proper Sphere, and never ſo dry and barren, yet a religious and holy Heart, can apply them to theſe divine Uſes of engaging itſelf further to God, and his Obedience: As the Lord himſelf teacheth us, *Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations*, Jer. x. And *fear ye not me who have placed the Sand*, &c. Jer. v. 22. So *praiſe is extracted*, Pſal. cv. And *Admiration*, Verſe. 1, 33. So Submiſſion and Patience under God's Hand is often preſſed in *Job*; therefore, if we only ſeek to know theſe Things, that we may know them, that we may diſcourſe on them, we diſappoint the great End and Scope of the whole Scriptures; and we debaſe and degrade ſpiritual Things, as far as Religion exalts natural Things in the ſpiritual Uſe; we transform it into a carnal, empty and dead Letter, as Religion, where it is truly, ſpiritualizeth earthly and carnal Things, into a holy Uſe, &c.

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HEART-HUMILIATION:

OR,

Miſcellany SERMONS

Preached upon ſome choice Texts, at ſeveral ſolemn Occaſions.

Christian Reader,

THIS holy Preacher of the Goſpel, had ſo many Convictions upon his Spirit of the Neceſſity of the Duties of Humiliation and Mourning, and of Peoples ſecuring the eternal Intereſt of their Souls for the Life to come, by flying in to Jeſus Chriſt for Remiſſion of Sins in his Blood, that he made theſe the very Scope of his Sermons in many publick Humiliations, as if it had been the one Thing which he conceived the Lord was calling for in his Days. A clear Evidence whereof thou ſhalt find manifeſted in theſe following Sermons upon choice Texts, wherein the Author endeavoureth, not only to lay before thee, the Neceſſity of theſe Duties of Soul-humiliation, but alſo ſheweth thee the Goſpel-manner of performing them, the many Soul-advantages flowing from the ſerious Exerciſe of them, and the many Soul-deſtroying Prejudices following upon the Neglect of them: But above all, thou ſhalt find him ſo fully ſetting forth the Sinfulneſs of Sin, and the utter Emptineſs of Self, as may convince the moſt phariſaically elated Spirits, and make them cry out with Ezra, *Chap.* ix. 6, O my God, I am aſhamed and bluſh to lift up my Face to thee, my God, for our Iniquities are increaſed over our Head, and our Treſpaſs is grown up unto the Heavens. *Here thou mayſt read ſuch pregnant Demonſtrations of the Righteouſneſs and Equity of the Lord's dealing, even in his ſevereſt Puniſhments inflicted upon the Children of Men, as may ſilence every Whiſperer againſt Providence, and make them ſay, as* Lam. iii. 22. It is of the Lord's Mercies we are not conſumed, even becauſe his Compaſſions fail not. *And laſtly, thou ſhalt perceive the inconceivable Fitneſs and Fulneſs of Chriſt as a Saviour, and his never enough to be admired Tenderneſs and condeſcending Willingneſs to accept of humble, Heart-broken, and Heart-panting Sinners after him, with ſuch Plainneſs of Speech demonſtrate, as may enable the moſt bruiſed Reed to quench all the fiery Darts of the Devil, whereby he laboureth to affright them from making Application to Jeſus for Salvation. Now, that the Lord would make thoſe and ſuch like Labours of his faithful Servants uſeful and advantageous to thy Soul (Chriſtian Reader) is the Prayer of*

Thy Servant in the Goſpel of
our deareſt Lord and Saviour.

A. S.

HEART-HUMILIATION:

OR,

Miſcellany SERMONS

Preached upon ſome choice Texts, at ſeveral ſolemn Occaſions.

SERMON I.

At a publick Faſt in *July*, Firſt Sabbath, 1650.

Deut. xxxii. 4, 5, 6, 7. *He is the Rock, his Work is perfect: For all his Ways are Judgment:* &c.

THERE are two Things may comprehend all Religion; the Knowledge of God and of ourſelves: Theſe are the Principles of Religion, and are ſo nearly conjoined together, that the one cannot be *truly* without the other, much leſs *ſavingly*. It is no Wonder that *Moſes* crave Attention; and to the End he may attain it from an hard hearted deaf People, that he turns to the Heavens and to the Earth, as it were, to make them the more inexcuſeable. The Matter of his Song is both divine and neceſſary; throughout it all he inſiſts upon theſe two, to diſcover what they were to themſelves, and what God was to them; he paralels their Way with his Way, that they finding the infinite Diſtance, might have other Thoughts of themſelves and of him both. 'Tis a Song 'tis true, but a ſad Song. The People of God's Mourning ſhould be of this Nature, mix'd, not pure Sorrow. 'Tis hard to determine whether there be more Matter of Conſolation or Lamentation, when ſuch a Compariſon is made to the Life; when God's Goodneſs and our Evils are ſet before our Eyes, which may moſt work the Heart to ſuch Affections. Nay, I think it is poſſible they may both contribute to both theſe. Is there any more abaſing and humbling Principle than Love? How ſhall the Sinner loath itſelf in his glorious Preſence? Will not ſo much Kindneſs and Mercy, ſo often repeated, as oft as it is mentioned, wound the Heart in which

there is any Tenderneſs? And again, when a Soul beholds its own Ingratitude and evil Requital of the Lord's Kindneſs, how vile and how perverſe it is, how muſt it loath itſelf in Duſt and Aſhes? Yet is not all Ground of Hope removed, ſuch a ſad Sight may make mixed Affections: If we be ſo perverſe and Evil, then he is infinitely Good, and his Mercy and Goodneſs is above our Evils: If we have dealt ſo with him, yet is he the Rock that changes not, he is a God of Truth and will not fail in his Promiſe. Nay, tho' it be ſad to be ſo evil, void of all Goodneſs, yet may the Soul bleſs him for evermore, that hath choſen this Way to glorify his Name, to build up his Praiſe upon our Ruin. May not a Soul thus glory in ſad Infirmities, becauſe his Strength is perfected in them and made manifeſt? May not a Soul chuſe Emptineſs in itſelf, that it may be beholden to his Fulneſs? How refreſhing a View might the ſadeſt Look on our Miſery and Emptineſs be, if we did behold his Purpoſe of manifeſting his Glory in it? Ye ſee here a Compariſon inſtituted between two very unequal Parties, *God and Man*; there is no Likeneſs, let be Equality in it, yet there is almoſt an Equality in Unlikeneſs. The one is infinitely Good and Perfect; well, what ſhall we compare to him, *who is like thee, O God, among the Gods?* Angels Goodneſs, their Perfection and Innocency, hath not ſuch a Name and Appearance in his Sight: So then, there can be no Compariſon made this Way; let no Fleſh glory in his Sight in any Thing, but, *let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord*, for in the Sight of the glorious Lord, all Things do diſappear and evaniſh. But ſurely nothing, tho' moſt perfect, can once come within Terms of Reckoning beſide him for any Worth: *Moſes* ſees nothing to ſet beſide God, that will appear in its own Greatneſs and native Colours, but the Creatures Evil and Sin, and if this be not infinite abſolutely, or equal to his Goodneſs, yet it comes neareſt the Borders of Infiniteneſs: So then, is God moſt perfect? is he infinite in Goodneſs, in Truth, in Righteouſneſs, *&c.?* And ſo infinite, that before him nothing appears Good? *none Good ſave One, that is God.* Yet we may find another infinite, and it is in evil ſinful Man; and theſe two Contraries ſet beſide other, do much illuſtrate each other. 'Tis true that his Grace ſuperabounds, and his Goodneſs is more than the Creatures Sinfulneſs; yet, I ſay, you ſhall not find any Thing that cometh nearer the Infiniteneſs and Degrees of his Goodneſs, than the Sinfulneſs of Men; how much the more glorious he appears, ſo much the more vile and baſe doth it appear.

If ye did indeed ponder and weigh theſe two Verſes in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, would not your Heart ſecretly ask this Queſtion within you, do I thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh and unwiſe? yea, would ye not account yourſelves mad *to forſake the Fountain of living Waters, and dig broken Ciſterns to yourſelves?* O! of how great Moment were this to humble your Souls To-day? This Day ye are called to mourning and afflicting your Souls. Now, I know not a more ſuitable Exerciſe for a Day of Humiliation, or a Principle that may more humble and abaſe your Souls, than the ſerious and deep Conſideration of theſe two, what God is, and hath been to us, and what we are and have proved to him; what hath made ſo many formal Humiliations

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that have provoked him to Anger? Certainly we do not either ſeriouſly think on any of theſe, or if on one of them, yet not on both; the moſt Part of you know no more in ſuch a Day, but a Name and Ceremony of a little Abſtinence. *Is this to ſanctify a Day to the Lord?* when ye do not ſo much as the People, who bowed down their Head for a Day, and ſpread Sackloth under them. I wonder how ye think to pacify his Wrath, and are not rather afraid of adding Fewel and Oil to the Flame of his Indignation. Ye come here and ſit as in former Times, and what do ye more either here or at home? There is no Soul-affliction, no not for a Day; the moſt Part of you are no more affected with your Sins and his Judgments, than if none of theſe Things were. Now, I pray you, what ſhall the Lord ſay to us, when he ſpeaks to the *Jews* in ſuch Terms, *Iſa.* lviii. 5. *Is it ſuch a Faſt that I have choſen, a Man for a Day to afflict his Soul?* And do ye ſo much as afflict it for a Day, or at all? Is this then the Faſt that he will chooſe, to abſtain from your Breakfaſt in the Morning, and at Night to compenſe the want of it, and no more? Is this an acceptable Day to the Lord? The Lord upbraids the *Jews, will thou call this a Faſt?* And what Reaſon have we to ask you, is it poſſible ye think ye do indeed faſt to the Lord? I cannot think that the moſt Part of you dare ſay, that ever ye faſted or afflicted your Souls.

Always here is the Way, if we conſider it, to ſpend a Day acceptably to the Lord, enter in a ſerious Conſideration of his Majeſty, and yourſelves; ſtudy on theſe two, till ye find your Hearts bear the Stamp of them, enlarge your Hearts in the Thoughts of them; both are infinite, his Goodneſs and Power and Mercy, and your Sin and Miſery, no End of them; what ever ye find Good in God, write up anſwerably to it, ſo much Evil and Sin in yourſelves and the Land; and what Evil ye find in yourſelves and the Land, write up ſo much Goodneſs and Mercy in his Account. All the Names of his Praiſe would be ſo many Grounds of your Confuſion in yourſelves, and would imprint ſo many Notes of Reproach and Diſgrace upon the Creature, found ſo contrary to him. This is even the Exerciſe God calls us to this Day, to conſider his Ways to us, and our Ways to him, how he hath walked, and how we have walked; becauſe ye looſe the Sight of theſe two, he ſends Affliction, becauſe in our Proſperity and Peace we forget God, and ſo ourſelves; as ye find this People did, *When they waxed fat they kicked againſt him, and forgat that he was their Rock:* We are ſo much taken up with our own Eaſe and Peace, that we do not obſerve him in his Dealings; therefore doth the Lord trouble our Peace, removes theſe Things we are taken up with, makes a publick Proclamation of Affliction, and bleſſed be his Name whoſe End is gracious; he means this, it is the Proclamation of all his Judgments, turn your Eyes off your preſent Eaſe here, conſider what I am, and what yourſelves are. No Nation ſo ſoon buries the Memory of his Mercies, O how ſoon are they drowned in Oblivion, and we forget our own Provocations as ſuddenly; therefore muſt he write our Iniquities upon a Rod, that we may read them in great Letters; and he writes his former Goodneſs in the Change of his Diſpenſations, when his Way to us changes, that we may know what is paſt. This is the great Deſign

that

that God hath in the World, to declare himself and his own Name, that it may be wondered and admired at by Men, and this cannot be but by our Ruin, abasing us in the Dust; he therefore uses to stain the Pride of all Glory, that his alone may appear without Spot. This is then the great Controversy of God with Men and Nations in all Generations, they will not see him alone exalted, and will not bow before him, and see their own Vileness. Why doth he overturn Kingdoms and Thrones? Why doth he shake Nations so often? Here it is; God's Controversy will never cease, till all Men acknowledge him in his Highness and Holiness, as the sole Fountain of all Life, and find themselves vile, less than nothing, nay worse than nothing and Emptiness. If ye would then have God at Peace with the Land and yourselves; here is the compendious Way, set him up a Throne of Eminency in your Hearts, and put yourselves in the Dust, take with your own Guiltiness and Naughtiness, and Impossibility to help yourselves in yourselves; hold these two still in your Eyes, that he may be alone exalted.

Look how unequal a Match, *Ver.* 4, 5. *He is the Rock*, a Rock indeed; if we speak of Strength, lo he is strong, if of Stability, he *is the Lord, and changes not, the ancient of Days.* Hath not thou heard and considered this, that *the Almighty faints not, and wearies not?* He holds forth himself in such a Name to his People, a ready, all-sufficient, perpetual and enduring Refuge to all that trust in him, and flie unto him as a Rock higher than they; and this is the Foundation that the Church is builded on, *against which the Gates of Hell shall not prevail.* God's Omnipotency for Defence, his Eternity, Faithfulness and Unchangeableness to make that sure, his Mercy and Goodness makes a Hole in that Rock to enter in, a ready Access for poor Ship-wreckt and broken Men, who have no other Refuge. This is our Rock on which the Church is builded, *Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. x. 4. *Mat.* xvi. 18. God were inaccessible in himself, an impregnable Rock; how would Sinners overcome him, and enter in to him to be saved from Wrath? Nay, but Jesus Christ hath made a plain Way and Path, out of the Waves of Sin and Misery, into this Rock higher than we; and so the poor Soul that is lost in its own Eyes, and sees no Refuge, is forced to quite the broken Ship of created Confidence, for fear of perishing; how doth it find a Door in this Rock to enter? And there is Water to drink of, *a Fountain of living Waters* comes out of it, and that *is Christ.*

Now, all these Names of his Praise rub so many Marks of Shame on his People; O how sad is the secret Reproof and Expostulation contained in this Commendation of God, he hath been a Rock to us, our Refuge that we fled unto, and found sure; for as in our Straits, we mounted upon his Power and were supported, when *the Floods lifted up their Waves*, yet have we left our Rock, gone out from our Strength; he offers himself a Rock unto us, his Fulness and All-sufficiency for us, and yet *we leave the Fountain of living Waters, and dig broken Cisterns*, had rather choose our own broken Ship to toss up and down into. He abides for ever the same; tho' we change, he changes not. How may it reprove our Backslidings, that we depart from our Rock, and where shall we find a Refuge in the Day of Indignation?

dignation? Is there any created Mountain, but ſome Floods of the Time will cover? therefore it is Folly and Madneſs to forſake this Rock that is ſtill above the Floods; *he is mightier than the Noiſe of many Waters.* It may reprove our Unbelief, we change our Faith according to the Diſpenſation, our Faith ebbs and flows as the Tide of his Providence, and thus we are as Sticks fleeting in the Water, toſſed up and down; but would ye be eſtabliſhed as Mount *Sion*? Would ye be unmoveable in the midſt of great Waters, that they ſhall not come near unto you? Then, by all Means get upon this Rock, that abides unmoved in the midſt of the Waves, tho' they ſhould beat on it, and the Wind blow, yet it is Proof of all Tempeſt; all Things might be driven up and down about you with the Lord's Diſpenſation, but ye ſhould abide the ſame, and might look round about you on the troubled Sea of Mens Minds, of Lands and Eſtates. If you come here, ye may make Ship-wreck, but ye ſhall not drown, tho' ye looſe the Creature's Comfort and Defence, yet ye are on your Rock, which is eſtabliſhed before the Rocks and Mountains; you may be ſure of Salvation, he that made the Rocks and Winds and Seas, is your Rock.

His Work is perfect] As he doth not trouble himſelf when all is troubled about him, *ſo he keeps him alſo in perfect Peace, whoſe Mind is ſtayed on him*; ſo alſo what he doth among Men, tho' it cannot paſs without Man's Cenſure, yet it is in itſelf perfect, complete, without Spot or Defect. What is the Subject of all Mens Queſtions, Doubts, Complaints, Cenſures, Expoſtulations and ſuch like, of which the World is full? 'Tis ſome one Work of God or other; there is no Work of his Providence, but ſome Man finds a Fault in it, and would be at the mending of it. *Neque Deus cumpluit, omnibus placet*, if he give Rain he diſpleaſes many, if he withhold it again, we are as little pleaſed The Reaſon of all this Miſconſtruction is, we look on his Work by Parcels, and take it not whole and intire, ſo it is perfect, and cannot be made better. *His Works are perfect*, in Relation to the Beginning and Original of them, his own everlaſting Purpoſe; Men often bring forth Works by gueſs, by their Purpoſe, ſo no Wonder it anſwer not their Deſire; but *known to him are all his Works from the Beginning*, and ſo he doth nothing in Time, but what was his everlaſting Pleaſure; often we purpoſe well, and reſolve perfectly, but our Practice is a Criple, Execution of it is maimed and imperfect; but all his Works are carved out, and done juſt as he deſigned them, without the leaſt Alteration; and, if it had not been well, would he have thought on it ſo, and reſolved it before Hand? *His Works are perfect*, in Relation to the End to which he appointed them. It may be it is not perfect in itſelf, a blind Eye is not ſo perfect as a ſeeing Eye; nay, but in Relation to the Glory of his Name, who hath a Purpoſe to declare his Power by reſtoring that Sight, it is as perfect. And in this Senſe, all the Imperfection of the Creatures and Creation, all of them are perfect Works, for they accompliſh the End wherefore they were ſent; and ſo the Night declares his Name, and utters a Speech as well as the Day, the Winter as the Summer, the Wilderneſs as the fruitful Field; for what is the Perfection of the Creature, but in as far as it accompliſhes his Pur-

Purpoſe and End, as the Maker of it ſerves himſelf with it; and therefore all his Work is perfect, for it is all framed in Wiſdom to his own Ends, in Number, Meaſure and Weight; it is ſo exactly agreeing to that, that you could not imagine it better. Again, *his Work is perfect*, if we take it altogether, and do not cut it in Parcels, and look on it ſo. Is there any Workmanſhip beautiful, if ye look upon it in the doing, while the Timber lies in one Part, and the Stones in another? Is that a perfect Building, when ye ſee one Arm here, another there, and a Leg ſcattered beſide them? Hath that Image any Comlineſs? Certainly no; but look upon theſe united, and then they are perfect. Letters and Syllables make no Senſe, till ye conjoin them in Words, and Words in Sentences; even ſo is it here, if ye look on the Day alone, the Light of it being perpetual would weary us, the Night alone would be more ſo; but the Interchange of them is pleaſant, Day and Night together make a diſtinct Language of God's Praiſe; ſo God hath ſet Proſperity and Adverſity the one over againſt the other, one of them it may be ſeems imperfect; nay, but it is a perfect Work that is made up of both, Spots in the Face commend the Beauty of the reſt of it.

If ye would then look upon God's Work aright, look on it in the Sanctuary's Light, and ye ſhall ſay, *He hath done all well.* Join the End with the Beginning, and behold they agree very well; many Things among us ſeem out of Order, many Things uncomplete. The Reformation of *England*, how great Obſtruction was in the Way of it? Is that now a perfect Work? Yes certainly; for if we know his End and Purpoſe, it is very well, and could not be bettered by the Art of all Men; *His Thoughts are far above our Thoughts.* The proſperous and uninterrupted Succeſs of that Party in *England*, is it a perfect Work? yes certainly, for if ye could behold their End, ye would ſay ſo, *They are ſet in ſlippery Places, their Foot ſhall ſlide in due Time.*

Entertain this Thought in your Heart, that he hath done all well, let not your ſecret Thoughts ſo much as call them in Queſtion; if once ye queſtion, ye will quickly cenſure them; hold this Perſwaſion, that nothing can be better than what he doth, nothing can be added, and nothing diminiſhed from them, he doth all in Number, Weight and Meaſure, 'tis ſo exactly correſpondent to his Purpoſe and Deſign, as if it were weighed out, and meaſured out for that End.

Let this ſecretly reprove your Hearts, the Perfection of his Works ſtains our Works, O how imperfect are they? And which is worſe, how impudent and bold are we to cenſure his, and abſolve our own? If he have a Hand in our Work, yet theſe imperfect Works, are perfect in regard of him; as we have a Hand in his perfect Works, yet his perfect Works are imperfect in regard of us.

SER-

SERMON II.

Deut. xxxii. 4, 5. *He is the Rock, his Work is perfect: For all his Ways are Judgment: A God of Truth, and without Iniquity, juſt and right is he. They have corrupted themſelves, their Spot is not the Spot of his Children*, &c.

THERE are none can behold their own Vileneſs as it is, but in the Sight of God's glorious Holineſs: Sin is Darkneſs, and neither ſees itſelf, nor any Thing elſe, therefore muſt his Light ſhine to diſcover this Darkneſs. If we abide within ourſelves, and Men like ourſelves, we cannot wiſely judge ourſelves; our dim Sparkle will not make all the Imperfections and Spots appear; but, if Men would come forth in the Preſence of his Majeſty, who *turns Darkneſs into Light*, and before whom Hell is naked, O how baſe and vile would they appear in their own Eyes? Is it any Wonder that the Multitude of you ſee not yourſelves, when holy *Iſaiah* and *Job* had this Leſſon to learn? *Iſaiah* gets a Diſcovery of his own Uncleanneſs in the Sight of God's glorious Holineſs, *Chap.* vi. 5. which I think made all his former Light Darkneſs; he cryes out *unclean*, as if he had never known it before; and ſo *Job*, *Since I ſaw thee I abhored myſelf in Duſt and Aſhes.* Ye hear much of him, and it doth not abaſe you; but if ye ſaw him, ye would not abide yourſelves, you would prefer the Duſt you trade on to yourſelves. Ye who know moſt, there is a Myſtery of Iniquity in your Hearts, that is not yet diſcerned, ye are but yet in the Coaſt of that Bottomleſs Sea of Abomination and Vileneſs. Among all the Aggravations of Sin, nothing doth ſo demonſtrate the Folly, yea the Madneſs of it, as the Perfection, Goodneſs, and abſolute Unſpotedneſs of God. 'Tis this that takes away all Pretence of Excuſe, and leaves the ſamen nothing, no Place to hide its Confuſion and Nakedneſs and Shame into; and therefore is it that *Moſes*, when he would convince this People of their Ways, and make them inexcuſable, he draws the Paralel of God's Ways and their Ways, declares what God is, how abſolutely perfect in himſelf, and in his Works, and had given no Cauſe of Provocation to them to depart from him: And then, how odious muſt their departing be? When both are painted on a Board before their Eyes; it makes Sin become exceeding ſinful. When the Lord would pierce the Hearts of his People, and in-

grave a Challenge with the Point of an Diamond, he uſeth this as his Pen, *Have I been a Wilderneſs to Iſrael, a Land of Darkneſs? Why ſay my People, we are Lords, we will come no more to thee?* Jer. ii. 31. *What Iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone from me, and walked after Vanity?* Jer. ii. 5.

There are two Things in Sin that exceedingly abuſe the Creature, the Iniquity of it, and Folly and Madneſs of it. 'Tis contrary to all Equity and Reaſon to depart from him that hath made us, and given us a Law, to whom we are by ſo many Obligations tied: But what is the Folly and Madneſs of it, to *depart from the Fountain of living Waters, and dig broken Ciſterns that can hold none?* Verſe 13. This is a Thing that the Heavens may be aſtoniſhed at; and, if the Earth had Senſe to underſtand ſuch a Thing, the whole Fabrick of it would tremble for Horror at ſuch Madneſs and Folly of reaſonable Souls; and this Evil hath two Evils in it, we forſake Life, and love Death, go from him, and chooſe Vanity. 'Tis great Iniquity to depart without an Offence on his Part; he may appeal to all our Conſciences, and let them ſit down and examine his Way moſt narrowly, *What Iniquity have ye found in me?* what Cauſe have ye to leave me? But when withal he is a living Fountain, he is our Glory, he is a fruitful Land, a Land of Light, our Ornament and Attire, in a Word, our Life and our Conſolation, our Happineſs and our Beauty; what Word ſhall be found, to expreſs the extreme Madneſs of Men to depart from ſuch an One, and change their Glory into that which doth not profit? If either he were not a Fountain of living Waters, or if there were any Fountain beſide, that could yield Water to ſatisfy the unſatiable Deſires of Men, it were more excuſable; but what Shadow ſhall be found to cover ſuch an Iniquity, that is both infinite Sin, and incomparable Loſs? 'Tis the Scripture's Stile given to natural Men, *Fools and Simple*; all Sin hath Folly in it, but the People of God's departing from him hath Extremity of Folly in it, beſide Iniquity, becauſe they do embrace a Dung-hill inſtead of a Throne, they make the madeſt Exchange that can be imagined, Glory for Shame, Life for Death, at leaſt, Conſolation and Peace, for Vanity and Vexation and Anguiſh of Spirit.

If ye would be duly affected with the Sight of your own Evils, look upon them in this Conſideration, and, in the View of God your large Portion, ye will be forced to confeſs yourſelves *Beaſts in his Sight*, Pſal. lxxiii. 22. Oh that Men would conſider how good and bleſſed the Lord is, how he is alone, and nothing beſide him in Heaven and Earth, all broken Ciſterns, all Dung and unprofitable, all Vanity and Vexation, he only ſelf-ſufficient, all others inſufficient, and therefore a proportioned Good for our Neceſſity and Deſires; and I am ſure ye would be conſtrained to cry out with *David, Whom have I in Heaven with thee, or in Earth beſide thee? It is good for me to draw near to God.* Ye would look on drawing near, and walking with him, and before him, not only as the moſt reaſonable Thing, but the beſt Thing, moſt beautiful for you, moſt profitable for you, and all other Ways would be looked on as the Ways of Death.

His Work is perfect] The Lord looked, and behold all was good that was made: So it was at firſt, the Fabrick

brick of this World was an exquiſite and perfect Work, a ſuitable Demonſtration of his infinite Wiſdom, wonderful in all the Parts of it, and in the Unity and Harmony of the whole: But ſo alſo his Work of Providence is perfect. Divine Wiſdom hath framed and contrived all, and it cannot be better. If any Thing ſeem imperfect in itſelf, yet it is perfect, in Relation to his glorious Ends he directs it unto: And ſo would we look on all the Works among us; if any Thing ſeemed a Spot and Diſgrace of the Creation, certainly the Sin of Men and Angels: Nay, but even that is ſo ordered by his holy Soveraignty, that in Relation to his Majeſty, it may be called a perfect Work. If ye do but conſider what a glorious high Throne he hath erected to himſelf for Juſtice and Judgment to be the Habitation of it, and Mercy and Truth to go before it, upon the Ruins of defaced Man, what a Theatre of Juſtice he hath erected upon the Angels Fall, ye would call it as perfect a Work as is in the World. His Work is one in the World, ſubordinate to one great Deſign of manifeſting his own glorious Juſtice and Mercy, Omnipotency and Wiſdom. Now what do ye ſee of it but Parcels? Tho' ye comprehend all your Time in one Thought, yet certainly ye cannot judge it aright; for it is but one Work that all the ſeveral Buildings and Caſtings down, all the ſeveral Diſpenſations of his Providence from the Beginning to the End make up; and when we think upon theſe disjoined, limit our Conſideration within the Bonds of our own Time, can we rightly apprehend it? Nay, which is worſe, we uſe to have no more within the Compaſs of our Thought, but ſome preſent Thing, and how much more do we err then? What Beauty, what Perfection can ſuch a ſmall Part have? But 'tis preſent to him, who beholds with a Glance all theſe Parts; tho' ſucceeding in many Generations, he ſees it altogether, joins the End with the Beginning, ſees the firſt Mould, the firſt Foundation-ſtone, and the laſt Compleating, all flowing from himſelf, and returning thither, and ending in himſelf. He hath made an Interchange in Nature, which might teach us, the Night alone hath no Beauty, nay, but it beautifies the Day; your darkeſt Hours and Tempeſts, publick and perſonal, are they perfect Works? Yes certainly, if ye compound them with your Sun-ſhines and Calms; ſeveral Colours make Pictures beautiful, the one is as needful as the other; and if ye did conſider your Profit more than your Honour and Pleaſure, ye would ſay ſo. He doth not model his Works according to our Fancy to pleaſe us, but our Good to profit us, and he is wiſer than we; and ſo then it is the moſt perfect Work in itſelf, that poſſibly diſpleaſeth us moſt. Therefore ye would judge of his dealing by another Rule, nor your Satisfaction, for pleaſe you and periſh you. If he ſpared the Rod, he ſhould hate us indeed; fond Love is real Hatred. Chriſtians, if ye would judge his Works by his Word, and not by your Senſe, by your Will, and not by your Will; certainly ye would ſay, as the Men did of Chriſt, *he hath done all well*; the World would diſcover to you a Perfection, even in Imperfection, a Perfection in Infirmities, that ye ſhould not only rejoice in them, but glory in them; *Moſt gladly therefore will I glory*, &c. ſaith *Paul*. Are Infirmities a perfect Work? Or is the ſuffering of *Paul* to be buffeted and tempted a perfect Work?

What Comfort is in it? yes much; Infirmities alone are Infirmities indeed: Nay, but Infirmities *in me*, and Strength *in Jesus*; Weakness in me, and Strength dwelling in me, these make up one perfect Work, that could as little want the Infirmities as the Strength; the Glory of God, and our Well and Consolation requires the one, as well as the other, it could not be complete without any of them. What do ye think of the Times now? Are *England*'s Apostacy, and *Ireland*'s Desolation perfect Works? That great Work of Reformation, that seemed to be above our Shoulders, 'tis now razed to the Ground, and the very Foundations removed. Is Deformation a perfect Work? Certainly, if we look on these Things in the Scripture's Light, and consider them in Relation to him who is the chief Builder, and doth in Heaven and Earth what he pleaseth; that Deformation is a perfect Work, tho' not a perfect Reformation; tho' we could not inform you of the Perfection of it, yet the general might silence us; all this shall be no Miss, no Marr in the End. His Work at the End of Accounts shall appear so complete, as if it had never had Interruption. He is wise, and knows what he doth; if this were not for his Glory and his Peoples Good, certainly it should not be. Was not the Peoples wandering in the Wilderness forty Years a most strange Work? a longer Interruption of the expected and begun Voyage out of *Egypt*? What human Reason would have stiled this Work with Perfection? Did they not often murmur against it? yet *Moses* calls this a perfect Work also. What if the Lord be digging the Ground deeper in *England*, that the Foundation may be the surer? What if he be on a Work of Judgment, filling the Cup of many deluded Blasphemers, that he may have another Cup of Wrath prepared? What if this be his great Purpose, to execute Vengeance upon a prophane Generation, that will not abide the very Name and Form of Godliness, by these who pretend to the Name of it as their Honour? What if the Lord hath defaced all that this Kingdom was instrumental in building of in *England*, that he alone may have the Glory in a second Temple more glorious? Many Things there may be in his Mind, and *he is in one Mind, and who can turn him?* and what his Soul desireth, even that he doth; and this may be enough to satisfy us, *He sees and knows all his Works from the Beginning.* And without all Controversy he hath provided it so, that the Reproach of his Name shall be made up with the more shinning of his Glory, and the Afflictions of his People shall be compensed with Songs of Deliverance. May ye not give him so much Credit, as ye would give to a skilful Man in his own Trade? Ye know it is his Name, *Excellent in Counsel, and wonderful in Working*; then take his Work, expound it according to his Word, and not your Apprehension. It may be his Work appears not excellent; nay, but if ye knew his Counsel, ye would think it so. His wonderful Counsel makes all his Works excellent; and therefore do not take upon you to judge his Works, unless ye could wade the Depth of his Counsels, else ye declare yourselves to be both ignorant and presumptuous. *There is a Time to build, and a Time to cast down, a Time for every Thing*, saith the wise Man; now, I say, he knows the Time and Season, he does every Thing in his Time. If ye come

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by a Work-man that is casting down a House that in your Appearance seems good, would ye condemn him presently? No, but stay till ye see what he will do next, wait till the due Time, and when ye see a better Piece of Workmanship on that Ground, ye shall absolve him. Tho' God often change his Work, do not think he changes his Counsel and Purposes as Men do; no, *he is in one Mind, and who can turn him?* therefore he had that Change in his Mind when he made the Work; when he erected such a Throne, he had this in his Mind to cast it down within such a Space, and so his Change, his throwing down is as perfect in his Mind, as his building up. Ye have large and big Apprehensions of temporal Kingdoms and Crowns of Government, and such like, as if they were great, yea only Things: But they are not so to him; all this World and its Standing, all the Kingdoms and their Affairs are not his great Work and Business; he hath a great Work, *the bringing of many Sons to Glory*, and the compleating of Jesus Christ, building of that glorious mystical Building, the holy Temple made up of living Stones, of which Christ is the Foundation and chief Corner-stone both: And 'tis this that he attends to most. Other Works among Men, tho' they have more Noise, they are less concerned; all these are but in the By, and subservient to his great Design, and like the Scaffolds of a Building, that are, it may be, sometimes very needful: Nay, but when the Building is compleated, he shall remove all these, he hath no more Use of them; *Kings shall be thy Nursefathers, Kings shall bow to thee.* He is not much concerned in Government nor in Governors, but for his little Flock's Sake; and if these were gathered, all these shall have an End, and the Flock alone abide for ever.

And all his Ways are Judgment] This is to the same Purpose, his Ways and his Works are one; and this is the Perfection of his Work, that it is all right and equal; whether they be in Justice or Mercy, they are all righteous and holy, no Iniquity in them, his Ways are straight and equal, exact as if they were measured by an exact even Rule; but because we make Application of a crooked Rule to them, we do imagine that they are crooked; as the blind Man judges no Light to be, because he sees it not. How may the Lord contend and plead with us, as with that People, *Ezek.* xviii. 25. Is it possible that any can challenge him and clear themselves, *who will be justified of all when he is judged*, and *before whom no Flesh can be justified?* And yet behold the Iniquity of Mens Hearts; there is a secret Reflection of our Spirits upon his Majesty, as if his Ways were not equal, whenever we repine against them, and when we do not take with our Iniquity, and stop our Mouths with Dust. Behold, the Lord will assert his own Ways, and plead with all Flesh this Controversy, that all his Proceedings are full of Equity; he walks according to a Rule, tho' he be not tied to a Rule; he walks according to the Rules of Wisdom, Justice and Mercy, tho' his illimited Soveraignty might be a sufficient Ground of clearing of all his Proceedings: But we walk not according to a Rule, tho' we be bound to a Rule, and a Rule full of Equity.

Here is the Equity and Justness of his Ways, the Gospel holds it forth in a twofold Consideration. *First*, If any Man

turn

turn from his Iniquity, and flee unto my Son as the City of Refuge, *he ſhall live, he hath eternal Life*; Iniquity ſhall not be his Ruin, altho' he hath done Iniquity. *O, who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth Iniquity?* Is not this complete Mercy? Whatever Iniquity hath been, aggravate it as ye can, tho' it could have ruined a World, yet it could not have ruined thee, that turns in to Jeſus Chriſt from Iniquity. What Exception can all the World have againſt this, or his walking according to it? And on the other Hand, whoſoever continueth in Sin, tho' he appear to himſelf and others never ſo righteous; if he entertain and love any known Sin, and will not part with it for Jeſus Chriſt, *ſhall not be die in his Iniquity?* Is there any Iniquity in this, that he receive the Wages of his Works, his Reward? that he eat of the Fruit of this own Ways? and drink of his own Devices? But how many Hearts cenſure this Way as a rigid and ſtrict ſevere Dealing: The Multitude think it Cruelty to condemn any chriſtned Soul, to put ſo many in Hell; the civil Man will think 'tis too hard Meaſure that he ſhould be ranked in Hell with the Prophane. But certainly, *all Mouths ſhall be ſtoped one Day, and be ſhall be juſtified when he judges*; ye that will not juſtify him in his Sayings, and ſet to your Seal to the Truth of the Word, you ſhall be conſtrained to juſtify him, when he executes that Sentence, ye ſhall precipitate your own Sentence, and rather wonder at his Clemency in ſuffering you ſo long.

This Way of the Lord is equal and right in itſelf, but it is not ſo to every one; *the juſt Man ſhall walk in it, and not ſtumble*, as in an even Way, nothing ſhall offend him, *Hoſ.* xiv. laſt *Ver.* Yet for as equal and ſtraight as it is, many other Tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein; they ſtumble even in the Noonday and High-way, where no Offence is. 'Tis true, often his own People ſtumble in it, as *David*, Pſal. lxxiii. and xciv. *David's Foot was ſlipping*, yet a ſecret Hold was by Mercy. It often requires a wiſe and prudent Man to underſtand it, becauſe *his Footſteps are in the deep Waters*, Pſal. lxxvii. 19. *His Way is in the Depths of the Sea, his Paths in great Waters*, ſo that Men muſt wait till the Lord expound his own Ways, till he come out of the Waters, and make them a dry Plain; and this is our Advantage, the Words ſays, *He is near thee, in thy Mouth, and neither above nor beneath in the Depths, that thou needs neither deſcend nor aſcend to know it*, Deut. xxx. 11, 12, 13, 14. But his Way is in the Depths, and his Footſteps are not known, ſo that we ought to hold us by the Word till he expound his Work; his Word will teach us our Duty, and we may commit unto him his own Way, the Word is a Commentary to expound his Ways. *David* loſt the Sight of God's Footſteps, and was like to wander, till he came to the Sanctuary; and this ſhined as a Candle in a dark Place, he learned there to know the unknown Footſteps and to follow them. By all Means embrace the Word, and be ſatisfied with it, when ye do not comprehend his Work; it teaches as much in general, as may put us to Quietneſs; all his Ways are Judgment, juſt and true in all his Ways is the King of Saints. If I do not comprehend how it is, no wonder, for he makes Darkneſs his Covering, he ſpreads over his moſt curious Engines and Pieces of Workmanſhip, a Vail of Darkneſs for a Seaſon, and

and *who can behold him when he hides himself*, says *Job*; and tho' he withdraw the Covering, yet what am I? *Who can by searching find out God?* If I shall examine his Way, what Rule shall I take to try it by? If I measure by my shallow Capacity, or by my crooked Way, shall I have any just Account of it? Will my Arm measure the Heavens as his doth? If I examine it, or try it by himself, *He is high as Heaven and unsearchable*. Therefore it becomes us to hearken to his Word, and believe its Sentence of his Work, when Reason cannot comprehend it.

One Thing (if it were deeply engraven on our Hearts) would be a Principle of settling our Spirits, in all the Mysteries and Riddles of Providence, the Knowledge and Faith of his Soveraignty, of his Highness, and of his Wisdom; should he give Account of his Matters to us? He is wise and knows his Works, but is he bound to make us know them? *His Ways are above our Thoughts and Ways, as Heaven above the Earth*, Isa. lv. And therefore, O Grashopper in the Earth, that dwells in Tabernacles of Clay, do not presume to model his Ways according to thy Conceptions. One Thing is certain, this is enough for Faith, *All his Ways are Mercy and Truth to these that keep his Covenant and his Testimonies*, Psal. xxv. 10. And there is no Way or Path of God so far above our Reach, and unsearchable, as his Mercy in pardoning Sin; and this is only the satisfying Answer to all your Objections and Scruples, in these ye do but vent your own Thoughts: But says the Lord, my Thoughts are above your Thoughts, as Heaven above Earth. Ye but speak of your own Ways, but my Ways are far above yours, they are not measured by your Iniquity; and therefore, *David* subjoins, *Psal.* xxv. Ver. 11. *Pardon my Iniquity, for it is great*,

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SERMON III.

Deut. xxxii. 4, 5. *He is the Rock, his Work is perfect: For all his Ways are Judgment: A God of Truth, and without Iniquity, just and Right is he. They have corrupted themselves, their Spot is not the Spot of his Children: They are a perverse and crooked Generation.*

ALL his Ways are Judgment, both the Ways of his Commandments and the Ways of his Providence, both his Word which he hath given as a Lanthorn to Mens Paths, and his Works among Men. And this were the Blessedness of Men, to be found both walking in his Ways, and waiting on him in his Ways, having respect to all his Commandments, and respect to himself in all his Works: We all know in general that he doth all well, and that all his Commandments are holy and just; nay, but our Practice and Affections bely our Knowledge; and for the most Part, we stand cross in our Humours and Affections and Conversation, both to his Word and Providence, and this is our Misery, *Great Peace have they that love thy Law.* What Peace then can keep that Heart and Mind, that is daily at Variance with his Statutes and Judgments? When the Heart would wish such a Command were not, when it is an Eye sore to look upon it. *Blessed are the Meek; it is good for a Man, both quietly to wait and hope and keep Silence.* How then must that Spirit be miserable, that stands cross unto God's Dispensations, and would limit the holy One? Do not our Hearts often say, *I do well to be angry, why is it thus with me?* But, *who hath hardened himself against him and prospered? His Counsel must stand*; and you may vex yourself, and disquiet your Soul in the mean Time by Impatience, but you cannot by your Thoughts add one Cubit to your Stature; you may make your Case worse nor Providence hath made it, but you cannot make it better by so doing, so that at length, you must bow to him or be broken; Oh then that this were engraven on our Hearts with the Point of a Diamond! *All his Ways are Judgment*; that ye might be overcome with the Equity of his Command and Dispensation, and your Heart and Tongue might not move against them. It was enough of old with the Saints, *It is the Lord, let him do what seems Good in his Eyes*; God's Soveraignty alone pon-

pondered, may ſtop our Mouth; but, if ye withal conſider, it is perfect Equity that rules all, it is divine Wiſdom that is the Square of his Works, then how ought we to ſtoop chearfully unto them. One Thing ye would remember, his Ways and Paths are Judgment, and if ye judge aright of him, ye muſt judge his Ways and not his ſingle Footſteps; ye will not diſcern Equity and Judgment in one Step or two, but conſider his Way, join Adverſity with Proſperity, Humbling with Exalting, take along the Threed of his Providence, and one Part ſhall help you to underſtand another. There is Reaſon in all, but the Reaſon is not viſible to us in ſo ſmall Parts of his Way and Work.

A God of Truth.] Strange it is that his Majeſty is pleaſed to cloath himſelf with ſo many Titles and Names for us. He conſiders what our Neceſſity is, and accordingly expreſſes his own Name. I think nothing doth more hold forth the Unbelief of Men and Atheiſm of our Hearts, nor the many ſeveral Titles God takes in Scripture; there is a Neceſſity of a Multitude of them, to make us take up God, becauſe we, ſtaying upon a general Notion of God, rather frame in our Imaginations an Idol than the true God. As there is nothing doth more lively repreſent the Unbelief of our Hearts, than the Multitude of Promiſes; Men that conſider ſuch frequent Repetitions of one Thing in Scripture, ſo many divers Expreſſions of one God, may retire into their own Hearts, and find the Cauſe of it, even the Neceſſity of it; but while we look ſo ſlightly on theſe, we muſt judge it ſuperfluous and vain. Needed there any more to be ſaid, but *I am your God, I am God,* if our Spirits were not ſo far degenerated unto Atheiſm and Unbelief? Certainly that Word *Jehovah* holds forth more to Angels than all the inculcated Names and Titles of God to us, becauſe we are dull and ſlow of Heart. Therefore wonder at theſe two when ye read the Scriptures, God's Condeſcendency to us, and our Atheiſm and Unbelief of him: They are both Myſteries, and exceeding broad. There is not a Name of God, but it gives us a Name, and that of Reproach and Diſhonour: So that for every one, ſome Evil may be written down; and it is to this Purpoſe, *Moſes* draws them out in Length, that in the Glaſs of his glorious Name, the People might behold their own ugly Face. This Name is clear, *He is a God of Truth,* not only a true God, but Truth itſelf; to note his Excellency and Eminency in it. It is Chriſt's Name, *I am the Truth,* the ſubſtantial Truth, *in whom all the Promiſes are Truth, are Yea and Amen.* His Truth is his Faithfulneſs in performing his Promiſes, and doing what his Mouth hath ſpoken: And this *is eſtabliſhed in the very Heavens,* Pſal. lxxxix. 2. His everlaſting Purpoſe is in Heaven where he dwells; and if any Man can aſcend up to Heaven, if any Creature can break through the Clouds, then may his Truth be ſhaken. His Word comes down among Men; nay, but the Foundation of it is in Heaven, and there is his Purpoſe eſtabliſhed; and therefore, there is nothing done in Time can impair or hinder it. Ye think this World very ſure; the Earth hangs unmoveable, tho' it hang upon nothing: All the Tumults, Confuſions and Reels hath been in the World, have never moved it to the one Side. Heaven goeth about in one Tenure perpetually, keeping ſtill the ſame Diſtance: Nay, but his Truth is more eſtabliſhed than ſo. Heaven and

Earth depends but upon a Word of Command; he hath ſaid, *let it be ſo*, and *ſo it is*. Nay; but his Word is more eſtabliſhed. Of it ſaith Chriſt, *One Jot or Title of it cannot fail, tho' Heaven and Earth ſhould fail.* He may change his Commands as he pleaſes, but he may not change his Promiſe; this puts an Obligation on him, as he is faithful and true, to perform it; and when an Oath is ſuperadded, O! how immutable are theſe two? when he promiſes in his Truth, and ſwears in his Holineſs. Is there any Power in Heaven and Earth can break that double Cord? *Mat.* v. 18. *Heb.* vi. 18. There is no Name of God but it is comfortable to ſome, and as terrible to others. What Comfort is it to a godly Man that truſts in his Word, *He is a God of Truth?* An honeſt Man's Word is much, his Oath is more. What ſhall his Word be, who is a God of Truth? Who, tho' all Men ſhould be Liars, yet God is true. Ye who have ventured your Souls on his Word, ye have an unſpeakable Advantage, *His Truth endures for ever, and it is eſtabliſhed in the Heavens*; the Ground of it is without Beginning, the End of it without End. Ye are more ſure than the Frame of Heaven and Earth, *for all theſe ſhall wax old as a Garment.* We ſpeak of a naked Word of Truth; Indeed it is no naked Word that is God's Word: His Works of Providence, and his Diſpenſation to you, is a naked and bare Foundation, nay, a ſandy Foundation, and ye who lean ſo much to them, is it any Wonder, ye ſo often ſhake and waver? All other Grounds beſide the Word are uncertain, unſtable, this only endures for ever. The Creature's Goodneſs and Perfection is but as the Graſs, and the Flower of the Field. Venture not much on your Diſpoſitions and Frames, thou knows not what a Day may bring forth, but his Truth is to all Generations, and it is well tried, as Gold ſeven Times, all Generations have tried it, and found it better than pure Gold. His Diſpenſations are arbitrary, no Rule to you; he loveth to declare his Sovereignty here, and to expatiate in the Creature's Sight beyond its conceiving; but he hath limited himſelf in his Word, and come down to us, and laid Bonds on himſelf: Will he then unty them for us? Give him Liberty where he loves it; take him bound where he binds himſelf. How may God expoſtulate with this Generation, as theſe of little Faith? *How long ſhall I be with you* ſaith Chriſt? How long will Chriſtians tempt the Lord in ſeeking Signs? and will not reſt upon his only Word and Promiſes? *O adulterous Generation, how long ſhall I be with you, and ye will not believe?* Is it not Righteouſneſs in him, either to give you no Sign at all, or to give you a Sign darker than the Thing itſelf, as he did to the Phariſees. Ye will give Credit to a Man's Word, and will ye not believe God's. An honeſt Man will get more Truſt of us than the true and living God: Shall he not be offended with this? We declare it unto you, that he is Truth itſelf, and will not fail in his Promiſe: Let that be your Caſtle and Refuge to enter into. Mercy and Truth are two ſweet Companions to go along with you in your Pilgrimage, *David* prayed for them, *Pſal.* lxi. 7. *O prepare thy Mercy and Truth to preſerve me*; who will not ly ſafe within theſe everlaſting Arms? What Power can break through them? And this he promiſed to himſelf, *Pſal.* lvii. 3. *God ſhall ſend them out*, &c. Mercy made ſo many precious Promiſes, and Truth keeps them. Mercy is the Fountain and

and Source of all our Conſolation, and Truth and Faithfulneſs conveys it to us, and keeps it for us: It is theſe two that go before his Face, when he ſits on a Throne of Majeſty, and makes himſelf acceſſible to Sinners, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 14. and ſo they are the Path-way he walks in towards thoſe who ſeek him, *Pſal.* xxv. 10.

But this ſweet and precious Name, that is as Ointment poured forth to theſe who love him, how doth it ſmell of Death to thoſe who walk contrary to him? *He is a God of Truth*, to execute his Threatnings on thoſe who deſpiſe his Commands; and tho' ye flatter yourſelves in your own Eyes, and cry *Peace, Peace, even tho' ye walk in the Imagination of your Heart*; yet certainly *he is a God of Truth.* I pray you read that ſad and weighty Word, that will be like a Milſtone about many Men's Neck, to ſink them in Hell, *Deut.* xxix. 20, 21. *Ye who add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt*, whoſe Rule of walking is your own Luſt, and whatſoever pleaſeth you, without reſpect of his Commands, and yet flatter yourſelves with a Dream of Peace, know this for a Truth, *the Lord will not ſpare thee, he that made thee will not have Mercy on thee*, his Jealouſy will ſmoak againſt thee, and all the Curſes written in this Book ſhall ly upon thee, and thy Name ſhall be blotted out from under Heaven. It was Unbelief of God's Threatning that firſt ruined Man, it is this ſtill that keeps ſo many from the Remedy, and makes their Miſery irrecoverable. The Serpent brought them to this Queſtion, *Hath God ſaid ye ſhall die?* And then preſently the Queſtion entertained becometh a Concluſion, *Ye ſhall not ſurely die.* Thus ye ſee how the Liar, from the Beginning, was contrary to the God of Truth; and he murdered us by lying of that God of Truth, and it is the ſame that ſhuts out all Hope of Remedy. Ye do not as yet believe and conſider that Curſe that was pronounced againſt *Adam*, but is now alſo inflicted upon us: Therefore, there is no ſolid Belief can be of the Promiſes of the Goſpel: And ye who think ye believe the Goſpel, do but indeed fancy it, except ye have conſidered the true Curſe of God on all Fleſh; But if any Man have ſet to his Seal that God is true in his Threatning, and ſubſcribed unto the Law, then, I beſeech you, add not the Unbelief of the Goſpel unto your former Diſobedience. *He is a God of Truth*, in Promiſes and Threatnings. It is ſtrange how untoward and froward we are, a perverſe Generation, we do not believe his Threatnings, but fancy we receive his Promiſes, or elſe, believing his Threatnings, we queſtion his Promiſes. But know this for a Truth, his laſt Word is more weighty, and the Unbelief of it is moſt dangerous. Ye have not keeped his Commands, and ſo the Curſe is come upon you, do ye believe that? If ye do, then the Goſpel ſpeaks unto you, the God of Truth hath one Word more, *He that believes ſhall be ſaved*, notwithſtanding of all his Breaking of the Law: If ye do not ſet your Seal to this alſo, then ye ſay he is not a God of Truth, ye ſay he is a Liar. And as for you who have committed your Souls to him, as to a faithful Keeper, and acquieſced unto his Word of Promiſe for Salvation, think how unſuitable it is for you to diſtruſt him in other leſſer Things. Ye have the Promiſe of this Life, whoever hath the Promiſes of the Life to come. Therefore do not make him a Liar in theſe, *He is a God of Truth*, and will

let you want no good Thing. *Say to the Righteous it ſhall be well with him*, whatever be. Let Heaven and Earth mix through other, yet ye may be as Mount *Sion* unmoved in the midſt of many Floods, becauſe of the Promiſes.

Without Iniquity.] Who doubts of that, ſay ye? What needs this be added, who charges him with Iniquity or Sin? Nay, but ſtay and conſider, and you ſhall find great Weight in this. It is true none dare charge him openly, or ſpeak in expreſs Terms againſt his Holineſs, yet, if we judge of our own and others Practices and Diſpoſitions, as the Lord uſeth to conſtruct of them: If we reſolve our Murmurings, Impatience, Self-abſolutions and Excuſes to hold off Convictions, into plain Language; if we would tranſlate them into a Scripture-ſtile; certainly it will be found that the moſt Part of Men, if not all, uſe to impute Iniquity to God, and accuſe him rather than take with Accuſations laid againſt themſelves. And therefore the Lord uſeth to go to Law with his People, he who is the Judge of the World, that cannot do Unrighteouſneſs, *he who is the Potter, and we all the Clay*; yet he ſo far condeſcends to us for convincing us, as ſometimes to refer the Controverſy between him and his People to other Creatures, as *Micah* vi. 12. He calls the Mountains and the Foundations of the Earth to judge between him and his People; and ſometimes he appeals unto their own Conſciences, and is content, tho' Judge, to ſtand and be judged by theſe who were guilty, as *Ver.* 3. and *Jer.* ii. *Ver.* 5, and 31. All this ſuppoſes that when the Lord would endeavour to convince them of Iniquity, they did rather recriminate, and took not with their own Faults. This is a Truth generally acknowledged by all. *He who is the Judge of the World doth no Iniquity*; but O! that ye conſider'd it, till the Meditation of it were engraven on your Spirits, the Seal of God's Holineſs, that ye might fear before him, and never call him to account for his Matters. Who can ſay I have purged my Heart from Iniquity? Among Men the holieſt are defiled with it, and ſo are all their Actions. But here is one that ye may give him an implicite Faith (ſo to ſpeak) *he is a God of Truth*, and can ſpeak no Lie, *he does no Iniquity*, and cannot do wrong to any Man. Would there be ſo much Impatience amongſt you, and fretting againg his Diſpenſations, if ye believed this ſolidly? Would ye repine againſt his holy and juſt Ways, were it not to charge God with Iniquity? Your murmuring and grudging at his Diſpenſations is with Child of Blaſphemies, and he who can ſearch the Reins ſees it and conſtructs ſo of it: You ſay by Interpretation, that if ye had the Government of your own Matters, or of Kingdoms, ye would order them better than he doth: How difficult a Thing is it to perſuade Men to take with their own Iniquity? O how many Excuſes and Pretences, how many Extenuations are uſed that this Conviction may not pierce deeply? But all this ſpeaks ſo much Blaſphemy, that Iniquity is in God. Ye cannot take with your own Iniquities, but ye charge his Majeſty with Iniquity.

Juſt and Right is he.] Is this any new Thing; was it not ſaid already, that he is *without Iniquity*, and *his Ways Judgment?* But alas! how ignorant are we of God, and ſlow of Heart to conceive him as he is, therefore is there *Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept*, and Name upon Name, if it be poſſi-

poſſible that at Length we may apprehend God as he is. Alas, our Knowledge is but Ignorance, our Light Darkneſs, while it is ſhut up in the Corner of our Mind, and ſhines not into the Heart, and hath no Influence on our Practice. And the Truth is, the Belief of divine Truths is almoſt no more but a not contradicting them; we do not ſeriouſly think of them as either to conſent to them, or deny them. Is there any Conſideration amongſt us now of God's Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, tho' it be frequently ſpoken of? And what Advantage ſhall ye have if ye do not conſider them? O how hard is it to perſuade Men's Hearts of this, that God is Juſt, and will by no Means acquit the Guilty, there are ſo many Deluſions drunk in in Men's Hearts, contrary to his Truth. *Let no Man deceive you, be not deceived with vain Words, know ye not*, ſaith our Apoſtle: Theſe are ſtrange Prefaces, would ye not think the Point of Truth ſubtle, that there needed ſo much prefacing unto, and yet what is it? Even that which all Men grant, God's Wrath comes on the Children of Diſobedience; but alas, few Men conſider, but deceive themſelves with Dreams of eſcaping it; tho' Men know it, yet they know it not, for they walk as if they knew no ſuch Thing.

Always however this is of little Moment to affect our Spirits now, yet in the Day that God ſhall ſet your Iniquities before your Face, and ſet his Juſtice alſo before your Eyes, O how ſad and ſerious a Thing will it be then? If theſe two Verſes were ingraven on our Hearts, God's Juſtice and Holineſs, our Corruption and Vileneſs, I think there would be other Thoughts among us than there are.

SERMON IV.

Deut. xxxii. 5. *They have corrupted themſelves; their Spot is not the Spot of his Children*, &c.

WE doubt this People would take well with ſuch a Deſcription of themſelves as *Moſes* gives. It might ſeem ſtrange to us, that God ſhould have choſen ſuch a People out of all the Nations of the Earth, and they to be ſo rebellious and perverſe, if our own Experience did not teach us how free his Choice is, and how long-ſuffering he is, and conſtant in his Choice. His People are called to a Conformity with himſelf, *Be ye holy, for I am holy*, Lev. Ch. xix. and xx. and to a Deformity and Separation from the Reſt of the World in their Converſation, from whom God had ſeparated them in Profeſſion and Privileges, *Lev.* xviii. 24. but behold what Unlikeneſs there is between God and

and his People. If ye were to paint out to the Life a Heathen People, you needed no other Image or Pattern to copy at but this ſame Deſcription of this People. It is this that makes *Moſes* in the Preface turn to the Heavens and Earth, and call them to hear his Song. And *Iſaiah* beginneth his Preaching thus, *Hear O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth*, &c. A ſtrange Thing it muſt be, that ſenſeleſs Creatures are called to wonder at. It muſt ſurpaſs all the Wonders and Prodigies of Nature and Art; and what is that? *I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, and they have rebelled againſt me*, &c. If we conſider what this People ſeemed once to be, and thought themſelves to be, we may eaſily know how they corrupted themſelves. If ye look on them at one Time, *Exod.* xix. 8. and *Deut.* v. 27. ye would call them *Children*. There was never a fairer Undertaking of Obedience than this, *All that the Lord hath ſpoken, we will do*; ſo that the Lord commends them for ſpeaking well, *Ver.* 28, *They have well ſaid all that they have ſpoken, Ver.* 29. *O that there were ſuch an Heart in them.* But compare all this People's Practice with this Profeſſion, and you ſhall find it exceeding contrary; they indeed corrupted themſelves, tho' they got Warning to take heed of it: *Take ye therefore good heed unto your ſelves, leſt ye corrupt yourſelves*, Deut. iv. 15, 16. But alas, it was within them that deſtroyed them; there was not ſuch a Heart in them as to hear and obey; but they undertake, being ignorant of their own deceitful Hearts, which were deſperately wicked. And therefore, behold what Corruption enſued and followed upon ſuch a profeſſed Reſolution; they never ſooner promiſed Obedience, but they diſobeyed; they did abominable Works, and did no good, and this is to corrupt their Way, *Pſal.* xiv. 1. &c. We need not inſtance this longer in this People, we ourſelves are a ſufficient Proof of it. We may make this Song our own, *We have corrupted ourſelves.* Once we had a fair Shew of Zeal for God, of Love and Deſire of Reformation of Life, many ſolemn Undertakings were that we ſhould amend our Ways and Doings: But what is the Fruit of all? Alas, we have corrupted ourſelves more nor they. *Iſrael* promiſed, but we vowed and ſwore to the moſt High Reformation and Amendment of Life in our Converſations and Callings. Lay this Rule to our Practices, and are we not a perverſe and crooked Generation? Oh! that we were more affected with our Corruptions, and were more ſenſible of them; then we could not chuſe but mourn for our own and the Land's departing from God. Did not every Man vow and ſwear to the moſt high God to endeavour Reformation of his Life, even a perſonal Reformation? But alas, where is it? *He that is filthy is filthy ſtill*; nay, which is worſe, the evil Man waxeth worſe and worſe: There is a great Noiſe of a publick Reformation of Ordinances and Worſhip; but alas, the Deformation of Life and Practice outcries all that Noiſe. Nay, certainly all that is done in the Publick, muſt come to no Account before God, ſince our Practices outcry it. Publick Reformation is Abomination, where perſonal Corruptions do not ceaſe. This made the *Jews* ſolemn Days hateful, *their Hands were full of Blood*, Iſa. i. All that ye have ſpent on the Publick will never be reckoned, ſince ye will not conſecrate your Lives to God, will not give your Luſts up to him. Ye are his

Ene-

Enemies in the mean Time, tho' you account yourselves Religion's Friends. I beseech you consider your Ways; would any of us have thought to have seen such Profanity, mocking of Godliness, and Ignorance in *Scotland* in so short a Time? Nay, 'tis to be feared that the Day is not far off, when ye will corrupt yourselves, and do abominable Things; yea, defile yourselves as ill as the Nations that know not God.

Every Man useth to impute his Faults to something beside himself: Ere Men take with their own Iniquity, they will charge God that gave no more Grace: But if Men knew themselves, they would deduce their Corruption and Destruction both from one Fountain, that is, from themselves. Ignorance of ourselves maketh us oft undertake fair, and promise so well on our own Head. What was the Fountain of this People's Corruption, and apostatizing from their Professions? The Lord hints at it, *Deut.* v. 25, *&c. Oh that they had such a Heart.* Alas, poor People, ye know not yourselves, that speak so well, I know thee better than thou dost thyself; I will declare unto thee thy own Thought; thou hast not such a Heart as to do what thou sayest; there is a desperate wicked Heart within thee, that will destroy thee by lying unto thee. If thou knewest this Fountain of original Corruption, thou would despair of doing, and say, I cannot serve the Lord. Now here is the Fountain of the Land's Corruption this Day: Why is our Way corrupted? Because our Hearts within were not cleansed, and because they were not known. If we had dried up the Fountain, the Streams had ceased: But we did only damm it up, and cut off some Streams for a Season: We set up our Resolutions and Purposes as an Hedge to hold it in; but the Sea of the Heart's Iniquity, that is above all Things, hath overflowed it, and defiled our Way more than in former Times. Ye thought upon no other Thing, but that presently ye would be all changed People, and would reform without more ado. And thus it is with you in all your publick Repentances. But alas, you know not yourselves; it is still within you which will yet corrupt you; and it was within us that hath undone us. We were too confident of ourselves, and it is no Wonder that the Lord suffer us to prove ourselves, that we may know what is in our Heart. Now therefore, since ye have so often tried it, I beseech you follow not such a Way again. Ye are called to *deny yourselves, and to follow Christ*; and this is a great Part of it, that ye may never expect for any Good within yourselves, or the helping of any Evil. *In me is thy Help found.* Look to the Fountain of Life, Jesus Christ, and despair of your own Hearts, for they are desperately wicked, so wicked, that if ye knew them, ye would despair of them, and give them over to another Hand, who can create a new Heart within you. Ye use to impute your Back-slidings to the Times, to Temptations, to Company, and such like. This is the Way that Men shift the Challenges of Sin: The Drunkard puts it on his Companion, the Servant on his Master that led him wrong, the People put Rulers in the Fault, and absolve themselves, and Rulers put one another in the Wrong, and absolve themselves. But alas! all of us are ignorant of ourselves: It is not Times nor Temptations that corrupt us, but ourselves. *No Man is tempted* (saith *James*) *of God, but every Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Lust and enticed,*

James

James i. 14. Temptation were no Temptation, if our Hearts were not wicked Hearts. Nay, many of us are ready to tempt Temptations, to provoke the Devil to Temptations: We caſt ourſelves open to Temptations. Temptation finds Luſt within, and Luſt within is the Mother to conceive Sin, if Temptation be the Father. Times do not bring Evils along with them, they do but diſcover what was hid before: All the Evils and Corruptions you now ſee among us, where were they in the Day of our firſt Love, when we were as a loving and beloved Child? Have all theſe riſen up of late. No certainly, all that you have ſeen and found were before, tho' they did not appear: Before they were in the Root, now you ſee the Fruit. All the Apoſtacy and Profanity that hath been vented in theſe Days, it was all ſhut up within the Corners of Men's Hearts at the Beginning: Time and Temptation hath but uncovered the Heart, and made the Inſide out, hath but opened a Sluice to let out this Sea of Corruption. 'Tis not bred ſince, but ſeen ſince.

Now ſo it is with us; we have corrupted ourſelves, and ſo we corrupt ourſelves ſtill more. Backſliding cometh on as gray Hairs, here and there, and is not perceived by Beholders. *Nemo repente fit turpiſſimus.* No Man becometh worſt at firſt. There are many Steps between that and good. Corruption comes on Men's Way as in Fruits, ſome one Part beginneth to alter, and then it groweth worſe, and putrifieth and corrupteth the reſt of the Parts. An Apple rots not all at once; ſo it is with us: Men begin at Leiſure, but they run Poſt or all be done. In ſome one Step of our Way we take Liberty, and think to keep the reſt clean; but when that Part is corrupted, *a little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump*, and all followeth: And then he that corrupted himſelf, is ready to corrupt others. *Children that are Corrupters*, Iſa. i. 4. Every one by his Example corrupts another; and by corrupting others, they again corrupt themſelves more. O! how infectious an Evil is Sin, of a peſtilentious Nature: And truly our Hearts are more ready to receive ſuch Impreſſions, than either a World, or a Devil is to make them.

Their Spot is not] Why doth the Lord take Pleaſure to reckon their Sins, to deſcribe ſo abominable a People. Is not this *Jacob in whom he ſaw no Iniquity?* Is not this *Iſrael, whoſe Tranſgreſſions are not known?* Certainly if this People would have charged themſelves ſo, he would not have done it. He loves to forget, when we remember our Sins: But he muſt remember them when we forget them. What is the Lord's great Controverſy with Men? Here it is, how can ye ſay or think that ye are not polluted? Or if ye take with ſuch a general, yet, why is not the Conviction of your Sin and Miſery ſo deeply engraven, as to purſue you out of all Hope of Remedy in yourſelves, *Jer.* ii. 21, 23. *And therefore is thine Iniquity marked before me*, ſaith the Lord. God hath determined not to wrong his Juſtice. If Men ſhould go away unpuniſhed and unjudged both, where were his Righteouſneſs? If there were no Record of Mens Tranſgreſſions, were he a righteous Judge? Therefore, thoſe who do not judge themſelves, muſt leave Judgment to him: For once the Mouth of *all Fleſh muſt be ſtopped, and all become Guilty before God.* Why pleads the Lord with Man? Becauſe Man ſays *I am Innocent, I have not ſinned, his Anger will turn*

away,

away, Jer. ii. 35. Will any ſpeak ſo in Terms? No indeed, but the Lord conſtructs ſo of the moſt Part, becauſe they do more conſider the Wrongs done to them, nor their own Wrongs done to God. All Men confeſs the general, that they are Sinners; but who ſearches and tries his Way to find out Particulars; and in as far as ye do not charge yourſelves with particular Guiltineſs, until ye be afraid of his Anger, as long as the Conſideration of your Sins is ſo ſuperficial and ſhallow, that ye apprehend no Danger of Wrath, or Immunity from it, certainly God will plead with you. Juſtice muſt ſo far be glorified, as once to conclude you under the Sentence of Death; If ye do it not now, then ye leave God to be your Judge and Party. But if any Man ſhall take with his Guiltineſs, till his Mouth be ſtopped, and condemn himſelf in God's Sight. I ſay, Mercy and Grace in God muſt not be wronged; *he that judges himſelf ſhall not be judged of the Lord.* What a fair Offer is this to you all? The Lord offers to you, if ye will in Time be your own Judges, I will reſign my Judgment to you: If ye will but in Earneſt paſs the Sentence, I will neither paſs it nor execute it. If ye come to the Mediator Chriſt Jeſus, to eſcape from the Wrath of a Judge, you ſhall meet with a reconciled Father, and with ſuch Love in him as ſhall hide a Multitude of Offences. O! the Depth and Heighth, and Breadth of that Love! Well then, it ſhall be a Sea to caſt your Offences into, that ſhall drown them. Had not his People many Spots? Is there any Man can ſay, *I have cleanſed my Heart from Iniquity?* No, not one. Yet behold, he ſees no Spots in his People: He doth not make them his People becauſe ſpotleſs, but he ſeeth them ſpotleſs, becauſe he makes them his People. There is no Covering that can hide Men's Uncleanneſs from his piercing Eye, but one, even Jeſus Chriſt his Righteouſneſs: And *bleſt is he whoſe Sins are covered.* If this Covering were ſpread over the Mouth of all Hell, then Hell ſhould have a Covering from his Eyes. If ye therefore ſtrip yourſelves naked of your own Pretences and Leaves, and think not yourſelf ſecure under any created Shelter; if ye hide not your Iniquity, then it ſhall be hid indeed: Here is a Covering that ſhall hide it from his Eyes. There is no Spot ſo heinous, none ſo ingrained, but the Blood of Jeſus can waſh it as perfectly out, as if it had never been, *Iſa.* xvi. 17. Tho' your Spots were ſuch as are not incident to his Children, yet this Blood cleanſes from one and all, it is of an infinite Nature. But tho' it be ſo, that *the Blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all Sin, that there is a Fountain opened in the Houſe of David for Sin and for Uncleanneſs*, for Sin and Separation, for ſuch hainous Offences as may ſeparate People even from the Congregation of the Lord's People. Yet there are ſome Sins, ſome Spots that ordinarily his People are not defiled with, and in this Reſpect they may be called *holy and undefiled in the Way.* There are ſome Marks and Characters of unregenerated Men, ſo legible and expreſs, that we may even read from Men's Converſation, that they are not the Children of God. Tho' the Blood of Chriſt waſh from all, yet the Child of God ordinarily is kept from ſome Kind of Spots, ſo that if a Man ſhall be ſpotted with them, 'tis no marvel he queſtion if he be a Child or not. There are two, which I think ſo groſs and unclean Spots, that I cannot conceive how a Soul waſhen by

Jesus Christ can be defiled with them: one is, a Course of Profanity: The common Walk of the Multitude is so gross and profane, so void of God and Godliness, that it witnesseth to their Face that they are not the Sons of God: *He that is born of God sinneth not*: He maketh not Sin his Way and Trade to walk into, and please himself into. What are the most Part of you, I pray you? Is your Spot like the Spot of his Children? Do not ye declare your Sin as *Sodom*, ye Drunkards, who wallow in it daily, and tho' ye profess Repentance, yet never amend? Ye who have a Custom of swearing and blaspheming his holy Name, do not ye carry in your Forehead a Spot that is not like his Children? The Child of God may fall in many Particulars, but it is not the Spot of a Child to continue in them, to add Drunkenness to Thirst, and yet to dream of escaping Wrath. I pray you consider it, for it is of great Moment. Do ye carry such a black Mark, the Devil's Mark? O! do not think yourselves safe. May not this persuade you? Do but compare yourselves in your Converse and Walk with an Heathen without the Church; set aside your publick Profession of coming to the Church, and hearing the Word, and Church Privileges: And is there Difference visible between you and them? Many of you pray no more in Secret, or in your Families, nor they: Ye curse and swear as they, ye are covetous and worldly as they; and, if ye can, do but draw a Line of Difference; and if ye cannot, then I ask what are ye? Is not this the Spot of Bastards? Another Spot is, Hatred of Godliness and the Godly: This is indeed the most lively Image of the Devil: *Who hates his Brother is of the Devil.* He that hates the Son can he love the Father: He that hates him that is Begotten, hates also him that begat him: And he that loves him that begat, loves him that is begotten. Now, how can he be begotten of God, who hates that Nature he is said to partake of, who hates him that is begotten? I wonder that many of your Consciences are not touched with this? How can ye imagine ye are Children of God, when there is none of your Neighbours that your Heart riseth more against, that ye can least abide, nor those who seek God most diligently, whose Conversation is different from the World's. Do not flatter yourselves, as if it were Hypocrisy ye hated? No, no, ye can agree with Profanity, and how can ye hate Hypocrisy? Ye can agree with a profane Hypocrite, with a profane Man, that feigns and dissembles Repentance; but if once he were so throughly changed, as to hate his former Way, and forsake it, then your Antipathy beginneth. What a ridiculous Thing is it for Profanity to take upon it to censure Hypocrisy? Certainly if Profanity cast out with Hypocrisy, it must be because it hath a Form of Godliness, which it so much detesteth. It is a strange Hatred at Godliness that a profane Man hath, that he cannot abide the very Shadow of it. I beseech you who love not Holiness in your own Persons, who hate to be reformed yourselves, do not add this Height of Sin to it, as to hate it in others also. If ye be not godly yourselves, do not add this declared manifest Character of a Child of the Devil to it, to hate Godliness in others. There were some Hope of you, if ye held it in Reverence and Estimation where ye saw it. There are many others Spots not incident to his Children, as this, that Men will not take with their

Sin

Sin and the Curſe; it is a great Difficulty to convince the moſt Part of Men how miſerable they are, how void of God: All the World will not put them out of a good Opinion of themſelves: And I think this hath been the Spot of this People; they would not take with their Guiltineſs, a ſtubborn-hearted People, whole-hearted. There needs no more to declare a Number of you not to be God's Children, but this, ye have lived all your Time in the Opinion and Belief that ye were God's Children, that ye believed in him; ye never ſaw yourſelves loſt and miſerable. This was the Spot of this People, that they eſteemed themſelves Children, tho' they had many Spots that teſtify'd to their Face that they were no Children: They waxed worſe and worſe, neither Mercies nor Judgments amended them; *When he ſlew them*, it may be, *they ſought him, and flattered him with their Mouth, but their Hearts were not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant*, Pſal. lxxviii. 34. Ye would have thought them a godly People while under the Rod for a Seaſon, but all that was but extorted and preſſed out by Violence of Affliction, as the Groans of a Beaſt under a Burden; but a little Time declared that it was but Flattery, tho' they thought themſelves ingenuous, and therefore they returned to their old Provocations, as a Sow to the Puddle, or a Dog to his Vomit. And is not this our Spot, even the Spot of great and ſmall. If any would look upon us in our Engagements and Vows under Trouble, we appear like his People, a praying, repenting and believing People: But how quickly doth all this prove Flattery? Do we not ſtill return to our old Ways that we have been examplarily puniſhed for, and which we ſo ſolemnly ingaged againſt. The Heat of the Furnace dieth out, and they wax colder and harder, a little Time wears away all their Tenderneſs: Every Man to his own Things, *and no Man ſeeks the Things of Jeſus Chriſt*. This was this People's Sin and Spot. *Jeſhurun waxed fat and kicked, and lightly eſteemed the Rock of their Salvation.* When their Heads were lifted up to Government, when they were raiſed out of the Waters of Affliction and Poverty, then they forgat God, they oppreſſed the Poor and Needy, eat up his People as Bread, and could not abide to have their Faults told them; they *ſaid to the Seers, ſee not, and to the Prophets propheſy not unto us right Things*, &c. Iſa. xxx. 10. I think likewiſe, that Oppreſſion is not the Spot of his Children, whoever uſe it. And Covetouſneſs preſſes Men to it, when Power is in their Hand to compaſs it. This is a vile Spot, unworthy of any Ruler, let be a Chriſtian. It was abhorred among Pagans. O! but *it cries to Heaven*, (ſaith the Scripture) it hath a double Cry when other Sins cry once. The Hainouſneſs of it crieth once, and the poor People cry again, and both theſe come up to the Ears of the Lord of Hoſts; nay, it hath the Cry of Murder and another beſide. He that is greedy of Gain, is ſaid *to take away the Life of the Owners thereof*, Prov. i. 19. So he is a Murtherer before God, and the poor Man's Blood crieth for Vengeance, and then himſelf ſeconds it, either by Prayer, or crying out for Miſery, *Job* xxxv. 9. All Men's Prayers and Profeſſions will not outcry theſe two. The Peoples many Prayers could not be heard, *Iſa.* i. 15. *becauſe their Hands were full of Blood*, which had a louder Cry than their Prayers. The Poor alſo op-

preſſing the Poor, is like a ſweeping Rain that leaves nothing behind it.

It is read in the Margin, that they are not his Children, this is their Blot. And indeed it is ſo: It is a great Blot and Stain in the Face of any Man whoever he be, that he is not born of God, that he can reckon Kindred to none but *Adam*: But what Indignity is it and Diſgrace for a People profeſſing his Name, yet to have no other Generation, to reckon no higher than the Earth and the Earthly. What is now the great Blot of our viſible Church? Here it is, the moſt Part are not God's Children, but called ſo: And it is the greater Blot that they are called ſo, and are not. O poor Saints eſteem your Honour and high Privilege, ye have received this *to be the Sons of God*. It is no Blot to you that you are poor and deſpiſed in the World: But it is and ſhall be an eternal Blot to the Great and Rich, and Wiſe in the World, that they are not the Children of God. Chriſtianity is no Blot, tho' it be in Reproach among Men, but it is really the Glory and Excellency of a Man: But the Want of it, alas, how doth it abaſe many high and noble, impoveriſh many rich, and infatuate many Wiſe? Ye think all of you are the Children of God, becauſe ye are in the Church, and partake of the Ordinances and Sacraments; and ſo did this People. But *Moſes* did not flatter theſe *Jews*, but told both Princes and People in their Face, that they were not Children of God, becauſe only *Iſrael* in the Letter, they had not Childrens Manners. Oh! that it might not be ſaid of the moſt Part of you, *that ye are not Children of God*, and that that is your Blot and Shame. It is the Shame of Rulers not to be the Children of God. They are Wiſe, they are Active, they are Noble, but one Spot diſgraceth all, one Fly maketh their Ointment ſtink, they are not gracious, many of them but Sons of Men at the farthеſt Reckoning, are not begotten again to a lively Hope. *Not many Wiſe, not many Noble, not many Rich.* The Scantneſs of gracious Men is the Spot of Judicatures, that there are many Children of the World, but few Children of Light in them. O! how beautiful and glorious would Judicatories be, if all the Members were Children of Light? What Glory would there be, if all of them did ſhine and enlightened one another? But what Beauty or Comlineſs, what Majeſty can be in Rulers or Judicatures, when the Image of God is not in them? This is alſo the Spot of Aſſemblies, Synods, Presbyteries, that there are few godly Miniſters. Alas that this Complaint ſhould be, even among thoſe whoſe Office it is to beget many Children to God; how few of them are begotten, or hath the Image of their Father? And thus Church Aſſemblies have no Beauty, ſuch as the Courts of Jeſus Chriſt ſhould have. O! that we were in Love with Chriſtianity and Grace, that it were our grand Queſtion, how ſhall I be put among the Children? The Lord ſeems to wonder at it, and make a Queſtion of it, *How can ſuch as we be put among the Children?* Jer. iii. 19. But he anſwers it himſelf, *Thou ſhalt call me, my Father, and ſhall not turn away from me.* There is no more, but take with your Wanderings and Wrongs done to God; imbrace him in Jeſus Chriſt, and he becomes your Father; and if ye be Children, ſure ye will reſolve to abide in your Father's Houſe, and turn no more to a preſent World, or your former Luſts.

They

They are a perverſe and crooked Generation] What Pleaſure hath the Lord in ſpeaking thus, when he upbraids none? Certainly, in a Manner it is drawn out of him. Would he object our Faults, if we did not defend them by Obſtinacy? Perverſeneſs and Crookedneſs is Obſtinacy and Incorrigibleneſs againſt Mercies and Judgments. *That which is crooked, cannot be made ſtraight*, ſaith *Solomon*. Then doth the Lord take Notice of Sins, when Men refuſe to return, and ſo maintain their Sins. It is this which heightens Provocations, and makes out the Controverſy Perverſeneſs in Sin. It is not ordinary common Infirmities that the Lord puniſheth, either in a Land or Perſon; but when Infirmities are diſcovered by the Light of the Word, when the Lord uſeth Means to reclaim Men in his Providence, and yet no Means prevail, then they are reckoned perverſe. Now, Perverſeneſs is not the Spot of his Children: The Child of God daily bows and folds to him, receives Challenges from him, takes with Iniquity, and yields unto God. O! that this Title might not be written above the Head of this Generation deſervedly. *This is a perverſe and crooked Generation.*

SERMON V.

Pſal. lxxiii. 28. *But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my Truſt in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy Works.*

AFTER Man's firſt Tranſgreſſion, he was ſhut out from the Tree of Life, and caſt out of the Garden, by which was ſignified, his Secluſion and Sequeſtration from the Preſence of God, and Communion with him: And this was in a Manner the Extermination of all Mankind in one, when *Adam* was driven out of Paradiſe. Now, this had been an eternal Separation for any Thing that we could do (for we can do nothing, but depart by a perpetual Backſliding, and make the Diſtance every Day wider) except it had pleaſed the Lord of his infinite Grace, to condeſend to draw near to us in gracious Promiſes and Offers of a Redeemer. If he had not made the firſt Journey from Heaven to Earth, by ſending his only Son, we ſhould have given over the Hope of returning from Earth to Heaven: But he hath taken away the greateſt Part of that Diſtance, in drawing near to our Nature; yea in aſſuming our Fleſh into the Fellowſhip of his glorious Divinity. He hath ſtooped ſo low to meet with us, and offered himſelf the tryſting Place between God and us, a fit meeting Place, where there is an Conjunction of the Intereſts of both Parties: And now, there is no more

more to do, but to draw near to God in Jesus Christ, since he hath made the great Journey to come down to us. We have not that infinite Gulf of Satisfaction to Justice to pass over, we have not the Height of divine Majesty, as he is infinitely above us, and offended with us, to climb up unto. Certainly we could not but fall into the Lake that is below us, if we were to aim so high. But the Lord hath been pleased to descend to us, in our mean Capacity in the Flesh, and fill up that immensurable Gulf of Justice, by the infinite Merits and Sufferings of his Son in our Flesh. And now he invites us, he requests us to come to him in his Son and have Life. We are not come to Mount *Sinai*, that might not be touched, that burnt with Fire and Tempest, where there were terrible Sights, and intolerable Noises. I say, such a God we might have had to do with, a consuming Fire, instead of instructing Light, a devouring Fire, instead of a healing Sun of Righteousness, considering that there is nothing in us, which is not fit and prepared Fewel for everlasting Burnings. But we are come (and that is the eternal Wonder of Angels) unto Mount *Sion*, to be Citizens in the City of God, and Fellow-citizens with blessed Angels and glorified Spirits, to Peace and Reconciliation with him who was our Judge. And if you ask how this may be? I answer, because we have one Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant to come to, whose Blood cryeth louder for Pardon of Sinners, than all Mens Transgressions can cry for Punishment of Sinners, *Heb.* xii. 18, 19, 20. *&c.*

Let us then consider the first Step and Degree of Union with God, it consists in Faith in Jesus Christ. This is the first Motion of the Soul in drawing near to God; for, *as there is no Remission without Blood*, so no Access to God without a Mediator. For if you consider what is in Jesus Christ, you will find that which will engage the Desire of the Heart; as also that which will give Boldness and Confidence to act that Desire. Eternal Life is promised and proposed in him, he offers Rest to weary Souls, and hath it to give. That which we ignorantly and vainly seek elsewhere, here it is to be found: For personal Excellencies, he is the chief infinitely beyond Comparison; and for Suitableness to us and our Necessities, all the Gospel is an Expression of it; so that he is presented in the most attractive drawing Manner that can be imagined. And then, when the Desires are inflamed, yet if there be no Oil of Hope to feed it, it will soon cool again. Therefore take a View again, and you may have Boldness to enter into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus. There was some Kind of Distance kept in the Old Testament, none but the High-priest might enter into the holiest Place: But the Entry of our High-priest into it, that is into Heaven, hath made it patent to all that come to him and apply his Blood. There is a new and living Way by the holy Flesh of Christ, consecrated and made of infinite Value and Use, by the Divinity of his Person; and therefore, having such a one of our Kindred so great with God, *We may draw near with a true Heart, and full Assurance of Faith, having our Consciences sprinkled*, &c. *Heb.* x. 18, 19, 20, *&c.* Now, since the Way is made plain to you, and the Entry is opened up in the Gospel; Do you not find your Hearts stir within you to draw near to him? Do you not find a Necessity of

making

making Peace by ſuch a Mediator? O! that you knew the great Diſtance between God and your Natures, and what the Hazard is, *Lo, they that are far from thee ſhall periſh*: Then certainly, you would take hold of this Invitation, and be eaſily drawn unto Jeſus Chriſt. But, unto you who have adventured to draw near for Pardon of Sin in Chriſt, I would recommend unto you, that you would draw yet nearer to God. After that the Partition-wall of Wrath and Condemnation is removed, yet there is much Darkneſs in your Minds, and Corruption in our Natures that ſeparates from him; I mean intercepts and diſturbs that bleſſed Communion you are called unto. Therefore I would exhort you, as *James*, *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you*, Chap. iv. 8. And that, wherein this moſt conſiſts, is in ſtudying that Purification of our Natures, that Cleanſing of our Hearts from Guile, and our Hands from Offences, by which our Souls may draw towards a Reſemblance of God. This Acceſs and drawing near to God in Aſſimilation, and Conformity of Nature, is the great Deſign of the Goſpel. *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* Now ye are agreed, *walk with him*, Amos iii. 3. as Enoch *walked with God*, Gen. v. 24. That is, labour in all your Converſation, to ſet him before your Eyes, and to ſtudy to be well pleaſed with him in all Things, and to pleaſe him in all, to conform yourſelves to his Pleaſure in every Thing. And this Communion in walking, eſpecially conſiſts in that Communication of the Spirit with God in Prayer: This is the neareſt and ſweeteſt Approach, when the Soul is lifted up to God, and is almoſt out of itſelf in him; and this being the ordinary Exerciſe and Motion of the Soul, it exceedingly advances in the firſt Point of Nearneſs, that is, in Conformity with God. Drawing often near in Communion with him in Prayer, makes the Soul draw towards his Likeneſs, even as much Converſe of Men together, will make them like one another.

Now, for the Commendation of this, *It is good*; What greater Evil can be imagined than Separation from the greateſt Good? And what greater Good, than Acceſſion to the greateſt Good? Every Thing is in ſo far happy and well, as it is joined with, and enjoyeth that which is convenient for it. Light is the Perfection of the Earth, remove it, and what a diſconſolate and unpleaſant Thing is it? Now, truly there is nothing ſuitable to the immortal Spirit of Man, but God; and therefore all its Happineſs or Miſery muſt be meaſured by the Acceſs or Receſs, Nearneſs or Diſtance of that infinite Goodneſs. Therefore, is it any Wonder, *that all they that go a whoring from him periſh*, as every Man's Heart doth? For we are infinitely bound by Creation, by many other Bonds ſtronger than Wedlock, to conſecrate and devote ourſelves wholly to God; but this is treacherouſly broken: Every Man turns aſide to Vanity and Lies, and is guilty of Heart Whoredom from God and ſpiritual Idolatry, becauſe the Affection that ſhould be preſerved chaſte for him, is proſtitute to every baſe Object: So then, this Divorcement of the Soul from God, cannot but follow thereupon, even an eternal Eccliſpe of true and real Life and Comfort. And whoever draw back from the Fountain of Life and Salvation, cannot but find elſewhere Perdition and Deſtruction, *Heb.* x. *ult.* My Beloved, let us ſet this aſide all other Things which are the Purſuits and Endeavours of the moſt

most Part of Men. Mens natural Desires are carried towards Health, Food, Raiment, Life and Liberty, Peace and such like: But the more rational Sort of Men, seek after some Shadow of Wisdom and Virtue. Yet the Generality of Men, both high and low, have extravagant illimited Desires toward Riches, Pleasure, Preferment; and all that we have spoken, is inclosed within the narrow Compass of Mens Abode here, which is but for a Moment; So that, if it were possible, that all these forementioned Desires and Delights of Men, could attend any Man for the Space of an hundred Years, tho' he had the Concurrence of the Streams of the Creatures to bring him in Satisfaction, tho' all the World should bow to him and be subject to the Beck of his Authority, without Stroke of Sword, tho' all the Creatures should spend their Strength and Wit upon his Satisfaction. Yet do but consider what that shall be within some few Years, when he shall be spoiled of all that Attendance, denuded of all external Comforts, when the fatal Period must close his Life, Peace, Health and all; and his poor Soul also, that was drowned in that Gulf of Pleasure, shall then find itself robbed of its precious Treasure, that is, God's Favour, and so remain in everlasting Banishment from his Presence. Do ye think, I say, that Man were happy: Nay! O happy *Lazarus*, who is now blessed in *Abraham*'s Bosom, who enjoys an Eternity of Happiness, for a Moment's Misery. But my Beloved, you know that it is not possible, even to attain to that imagined Happiness here. All the Gain that is found, is not able to quit the Cost and Expence of Grief, Vexation, Care, Toiling and Sweating that is about them.

But if you would be perswaded, there is that to be found easily, which you trouble yourselves, seeking elsewhere: And believe me, tho' the general Apprehension of Men be, that Peace, Plenty, Preferment and Satisfaction in this Life, to compense their Pains, is more easily attainable than Fellowship and Communion with God; yet I am perswaded, that there is nothing more practicable than the Life of Religion. God hath condemned the World under Vanity and a Curse, and that which is crooked, can by no Art or Strength be made straight; but he hath made this attainable by his gracious Promises, even a blessed Life, in approaching near to himself the Fountain of all Life. And this is a certain Good, an universal Good, and an eternal Good: It will not disappoint you as other Things do, of which you have no Assurance for all your Toilings. This is made more infallible to a Soul that truly seeks it in God. It is as certain, that they cannot be ashamed through Frustration, as that he is faithful. And then it is an universal Good, one comprehensive of all, one eminently and virtually all Things created, to be joined to the infinite Allfulness of God: This advanceth the Soul to a Participation of all that is in him. This is Health, *Psal.* xlii. last, *Prov.* iii. 8. This is Light, *John.* viii. 12. It is Life, *John* xi. 25. Liberty, *John* viii. 36. Food and Raiment, *Isa* lxi. 10. and *John* iv. 14. And what not? It is Profit, Pleasure, Preferment in the superlative Degree, and not scattered in so many various Streams, which divide and distract the Heart, but all combined in one. It is the true Good of both Soul and Body, and so the only Good of Man. And *lastly*, it is eternal, to be coetaneous with thy Soul: Of all other Things it may be said, *I have seen an End*

End of them, they were and are not; but this will ſurvive Time, and all the Changes of it, and then it will begin to be perfect, when all Perfection is at an End. Now from all this, I would exhort you in Jeſus Chriſt, to ponder thoſe Things in your Hearts, and conſider them in Reference to your own Souls, that ye may ſay with *David*, *It is good for me to draw near to God.*

That which all Men ſeek after, is Happineſs and Well-being. Men purſue nothing but under the Notion of Good; and to complete that which may be called Good, there is required ſome Excellency in the Thing itſelf, and then a Convenience and Suitableneſs to us, and theſe jointly draw the Heart of Man: But the great Miſery is, that there is ſo much Ignorance and Miſapprehenſion of that which is truly Good; and then, when any Thing of it is known, there is ſo little ſerious Conſideration and Application of it to ourſelves; and this makes the moſt Part of Men wander up and down in the Purſuit of divers Things, which are not that true Good of the Soul, and ſet their Hearts on that which is not, until they find their Hearts fall down, as wanting a Foundation, and then they turn about again to ſome other Vanity. And ſo the Wanderings and Strayings of Men are infinite, becauſe the By-ways are innumerable, tho' the true Way be but one. Yea, the Turnings and Toilings of one Man are various and manifold, becauſe he quickly loſes the Sent of Happineſs in every Way he falls into, and therefore muſt turn to another. And thus Men are never at any ſolid ſetting about this great Buſineſs, never reſolute wherein this Happineſs conſiſts, nor peremptory to follow it; but they fluctuate upon uncertain Apprehenſions, and diverſe Affections, until the Time and Date of Salvation expire; and then they muſt know certainly and ſurely, the inevitable Danger and irrecoverable Loſs they have brought themſelves to, who would not take Notice of the ſure Way, of eſcaping both Wrath, and attaining Happineſs, while it was to be found.

Well then, this is the great Buſineſs we have here to do; yea, to make the Circle the larger, it is that great Buſineſs we have to do in this World, to know wherein the true Well-being and eternal Welfare of our Souls conſiſts, and by any Means to apply unto that, as the only Thing neceſſary, in regard of which, all other Things are Ceremonies, Circumſtances and indifferent Things. And to guide us in this Examination and Application, here is one Man, who having almoſt made Ship-wreck upon the Rocks which Men commonly daſh upon, and being by the Lord led ſafely by, and almoſt arrived at the Coaſt of true Felicity; he ſets out a Beacon, and lights a Candle to all who ſhall follow him, to direct them which Way they ſhall ſteer their Courſe. Examples teach more effectually than Rules; it is eaſy for every Man to ſpeak well upon this Point in general, and readily all will acknowledge, that here it is, and no where elſe: But yet all this is Outcrying by the contrary Noiſe of every Man's Practice. Theſe general Grants of Truth, are recalled in the Converſations of Men, therefore they cannot have much Influence upon any Man: But when we hear one ſpeak, and ſee him walk ſo too; when we have the Example of a moſt wiſe Man, who wanted not theſe worldly Expectations, which other Men have: So that, he not only propones it to us, but after much ſerious Adviſement, after

mature Conſideration of all that can be ſaid of the Wicked's beſt Eſtate, and the Godly's worſt, ſetting down reſolute Concluſions for himſelf. *It is good for me to draw near to God*; yea, ſo determinate into it, that if none of the World ſhould be of that Mind, he would not change it; tho' all ſhould walk in other Ways, he would chooſe to be rather alone in this, than in the greateſt Croud of Company in any other. Now, I ſay, when we have ſuch a Copy caſt us, a Man of excellent Parts in Sobriety and Sadneſs, chooſing that Way, which all in Words confeſs to be the beſt; ſhould not this awake us out of our Dreams, and raiſe us up to ſome more Attention and Conſideration of what we are doing? The Words you ſee, are the holy Reſolution of a holy Heart, concerning that which is the chiefeſt Good. You ſee the Way to Happineſs, and you find the particular Application of that to *David*'s Soul, or of his Soul to it. We ſhall ſpeak a Word of the Thing itſelf, then of the Commendation of it, then of the Application of it.

For the Thing itſelf, *drawing near to God*, it gives us ſome Ground to take a View of the Poſture in which Men are found by Nature, *far off from God*. Our Condition by Nature, I cannot ſo fitly expreſs, as in the Apoſtle's Words, *Eph.* ii. 12. *Without Chriſt, Aliens from the Common wealth of Iſrael, Strangers from the Covenant of Promiſe, having no Hope, and without God in the World.* A deplorable Eſtate indeed, hopeleſs and helpleſs; no Hope in it, that is the Extremity of Miſery, the Refuſe of all Conditions. *Without Chriſt, and without God.* O! theſe are Words of infinite Weight: Without thoſe, without whom it is ſimply impoſſible to be happy; and without whom it is not poſſible but to be miſerable, without the Fountain of Light, Life and Conſolation, without which there is nothing but pure Darkneſs, without any Beam of Light; nothing but Death, without the leaſt breathing of Life; nothing but Vexation, without the leaſt Drop of Conſolation. In a Word, without theſe, and wanting theſe, whom if you want, it were good to be ſpoiled of all Being; to be nothing, if that could be, or never to have been any Thing. Men will ſeek Death, and cannot find it. O! what a Loſs and Deprivement is the Loſs of God, which makes Death more deſirable than Life; and not to be at all, infinitely preferable to any Being. Now, it is true, that the bringing in of Multitudes within the Pale of the viſible Church, is ſome Degree of Acceſs and Nearneſs to God; for then they become Citizens (as to external Right) in the Common wealth of the Church, and have the Offers of the Promiſes made to them; in reſpect of which viſible ſtanding, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the whole Church of *Epheſus*. *But now ye are made near who were far off*, Ver. 13. notwithſtanding, that many of them were found afterwards to have left their firſt Love, *Rev.* ii. But yet, Beloved, to ſpeak more inwardly, and as your Souls ſtand in the Sight of God; the Generality of thoſe who are near Hand in outward Ordinances, are yet far off from God in Reality, *without God and without Chriſt*, as really as touching any Soul-feeling, as thoſe who are altogether without. The Bond of Peace and Union was broken in Paradiſe, Sin diſſolved it, and broke off that Nearneſs and Friendſhip with God; and from that Day to this Day, there hath been an infinite Diſtance and Separation be-

betwixt God and Man. The Steps and Degrees of it are many; there is Darkneſs and Blindneſs in Mens Minds: Such Ignorance naturally poſſeſſeth the Multitude, ſo that it wholly alienates them from the Life of God, *Eph.* iv. 18. For what Fellowſhip can Light, that pure Light, have with ſuch groſs Darkneſs as is among us? This certainly is the Removal of that Sun of Righteouſneſs from our Souls, or the Impoſition of the Clouds of Tranſgreſſion, that makes it ſo dark a Night in the Souls of Men. And then there is nothing but Enmity and deſperate Wickedneſs in the Heart of Man, and this keeps the ſtrong Hold of the Affections, *Rom.* viii. *Jer.* xvii. There cannot be a further Elongation or Separation of the Soul from God, than to turn ſo oppoſite in all Inclinations and Diſpoſitions of his holy Will: For the Diſtance between God and us, is not local in the Point of Place; for whither ſhall we go from him who is every where? And thus he is near Hand every one of us; but it is alſo real in the Deformity and Repugnancy of our Natures to his holy Will. But add unto this, that being thus ſeparated in Affection, and disjoined as it were in natural Diſpoſitions, we cannot draw near to God in any Ordinance, as the Word, Prayer, *&c.* Tho' we may, as that People, draw near with our Lips, and ask of him our Duty, and ſeem to delight to know him; yet there is this natural Incapacity and Crookedneſs in the Heart of Man, that it cannot truly approach unto the Father of Spirits, with any Soul Deſire and Delight. But *their Hearts are removed far from me*, Iſa. vi. 9. Mat. iv. 12. I think Men might obſerve, that their Souls act not in religious Buſineſs as they ſhould, but that they remove their Souls many Miles diſtant from their Bodies, and they cannot keep any Conſtancy in this Approach of Prayer to God, cannot walk with him in their Converſation, or carry him along in their Meditation. But there is one Point of Eſtrangement and Separation ſuperadded to all, that there is no Man can come near to God, without an Oblation and Offering of Peace; that there is no approaching to him, but as to a conſuming Fire, except we can bring a Sacrifice to appeaſe, and a Preſent to pleaſe him for our infinite Offences: There the Difference ſtands, we cannot draw near to walk together, till we be agreed. And truly, this unto Man is impoſſible, for we have nothing ſo precious as the Redemption of our Souls, nothing can compenſe infinite Wrongs, or ſatisfy infinite Juſtice. Now, this ſeems to make our Nearneſs again deſperate, and to put Men furtheſt off from Hope.

Notwithſtanding, this is the very Purpoſe of the Goſpel, preached from the beginning of the World, to remove that Diſtance, and to take Impediments of meeting out of the Way; for that great Obſtruction, the want of a Sacrifice, and Ranſom, the Lord hath ſupplied it, he himſelf hath furniſhed it: And it was the great Deſign carried on from the beginning of the World; but as the Sun, the nearer he is, the more the Earth is enlightened; ſo here, firſt ſome dawning of Light appears, as a Meſſenger of Hope, to tell that the Redeemer ſhall come, that the true Sacrifice ſhall be ſlain, then ſtill the nearer his own appearing, the clearer are the Manifeſtations of him, and the great Deſign is more opened up, till at length he breaks out in Glory from under a Cloud, and ſhews himſelf to the World, to be *that Lamb*

of God that should take away the Sins of the World. And now as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* speaks, *Chap.* vii. 19. *The Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better Hope did, by the which we draw nigh to God.* All the Sacrifices and Shadows that were under the Law, did but point at this perfect Ransom; and the Way of Access to God through a Mediator was not so clear; but now the Matter is made as hopeful as is possible, the Partition-wall of the Law's Curses, the Hand-writting against us is removed on the Cross, the Enmity slain, the Distance removed by the Blood of the Cross, being partly filled up by his Descent into our Nature, partly by his lower Descent in our Nature to suffer Death. And this is the savoury Oblation that we have to present to God, and may have Boldness to come nigh because of it. And when once our Access is made by the Blood of Jesus Christ, then we are called and allowed to come still nigher, to cleave and adhere to him as our Father, to pray unto him, to walk with him; then we should converse as Friends and Familiars together, then draw nigh to his Light for Illumination, and to him as the Fountain of Life, for quickening, to place our Delight and Desire in him, to forsake all other Things, even our Wills and Pleasures, and to lose them, that they may be found in his; to converse much in his Company, and be often in Communication with him, and Meditation upon him. This is the very Design and Substance of the Gospel; it holds forth the Way of making up the Breach between Man and God, of bringing you nigh who are yet afar off, and nearer who are near hand. Oh let us hearken to it.

SERMON VI.

Prov. xxvii. 1. *Boast not thyself of To-morrow, for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.*

THERE are some peculiar Gifts that God hath given to Man in his first Creation, and endued his Nature with, beyond other living Creatures, which being rightly ordered and improved towards the right Objects, do advance the Soul of Man to a wonderful Height of Happiness, that no other sublunary Creature is capable of. But by Reason of Man's Fall into Sin, these are quite disordered, and turned out of the right Channel; and therefore, as the right Improvement of them would make Man happy, so the wrong Imployment of them loadens him with more real Misery, than any other Creature: I mean, God hath given to Man two notable Capacities, beyond other Things; one is,

is, to know and reflect upon himself, and to consider what Conveniency is in any Thing towards himself; what Goodness or Advantage redounds to himself from them, and in that Reflection and Comparison to enjoy what he hath; another is to look forward beyond the present Time, and, as it were, to anticipate and prevent the slow Motions of Time, by a Kind of Foresight and Providence. In a Word, he is a Creature framed unto more Understanding than others, and so capable of more Joy in present Things, and more Foresight of the Time to come; he is made mortal, yet with an immortal Spirit, of an immortal Capacity, that hath its Eye upon the Morrow, upon Eternity. Now, herein consists either Man's Happiness or Misery, how he reflects upon himself, and what he chooseth for the Matter of his Joy and Gloriation, and what Providence he hath for the Time to come. If those be rightly ordered, all is Well; but if not, then Wo unto him, there is more Hope of a Beast than of him.

Man's Nature inclines to boasting, to glorying in something, and this ariseth from some apprehended Excellency or Advantage, and so is originated in the understanding Power of Man, which is far above Beasts: Beasts find the Things themselves, but they do not, they cannot reflect upon their own Enjoyment of them, and therefore they are not capable of such Pleasure; for the more distinct Knowledge of Things in Relation to ourselves, the more Delight ensueth upon it. Many Creatures have singular Qualities and Vertues, but they are nothing the happier; for they know them not, and have no Use of them, but are wholly destinated to the Use of Man, who therefore is only said to enjoy them, because he only is capable of Joy from them. And this, I suppose, may give us a Hint at the absolute incomprehensible Blessedness, Self-complacency and Delight of God; it cannot but be immeasurably great, seeing the Knowledge of himself and all Creatures is infinite; he comprehends all his own Power and Virtue and Goodness, and therefore his Delight and Rejoicing is answerable. There is a Glorying and Boasting then that is Good, which Man is naturally framed unto; And this is that which *David* expresses, *Psal.* xxxiv. 2. *My Soul shall make her boast in God*; and *Psal.* xlviii 8. *In God we boast all the Day long, and praise thy Name for ever.* When the Soul apprehends that All-sufficiency, and Self-sufficient Fulness of God; what infinite Treasures of Goodness, and Wisdom and Power are in him, and so how suitable and convenient he is to the Condition of the Soul; what a sweet Correspondence there is between his Fulness and our Emptiness, his Mercy and our Misery, his Infiniteness and our Unsuitableness; that there is in him to fill and overflow the Soul: The Apprehension of this, cannot but in a Manner perfume the Soul with Delight. You find how the Senses are refreshed, when they meet with their suitable Object; how a pleasant Smell refresheth the Sent; how lively and beautiful Colours are delightful to the Eye. But much more here, God is the proportioned Object of the immortal Spirit, he corresponds to all its Capacities, and fills it with unconceivable Sweetness. But, my Beloved, Boasting and Glorying in him, ariseth not only from the Proportionableness and Conveniency of him to our Spirits; but this must be superadded, Propriety in him. Things are loved, because excellent

lent in themſelves, or becauſe they are our own: But we boaſt in nothing, we glory in nothing, but becauſe it is both excellent in itſelf, and ours beſides. It is the apprehended Intereſt in any Thing, makes the Soul riſe and lift up itſelf after this Manner, to have ſuch a One to be ours, ſuch a Lord to be our God, one ſo high and ſublime, one ſo univerſally full to be made over to thee; here is the immediate Riſe of the Soul's Gloriation. And truly, as there is nothing can be ſo ſuitable a Portion, ſo there is nothing that can be ſo truly made ours as God; of all Things a Believer hath, there is nothing ſo much his own as God, nothing ſo indiſſolubly tied unto him, nothing ſo inſeparably joined. See *Paul's* Triumph upon the Account, *Rom.* viii. Nothing can truly be ſaid to be the Soul's own, but that which is not only coetaneous with it, that ſurvives Mortality, and the Changes of the Body, but likewiſe is inſeparable from it. What a poor empty Sound is all that can be ſpoken of him, till your Souls be once poſſeſſed of him? It cannot make your Hearts leap within you, but it cannot but excite and ſtir up a Believer's Heart.

Now there may be a lawful Kind of Gloriation, rejoicing in the Works of God, conſequent to the firſt, which is a little Stream from that greater River which runs out from it, and flows in to it again. A Soul that truly apprehends God, will take Delight to view the Works of God, which make ſuch an Expreſſion of him, and are a Part of the Magnificence of our heavenly Father: But this is all in Reference to him and not to ourſelves, for then it degenerates and loſeth its Sweetneſs, when once it turns the Channel towards the adorning of the Creature. True Boaſting in God, hath neceſſarily conjoined with it, an humble and low Eſteem of a Man's ſelf, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 2. *The humble ſhall hear thereof, and be glad.* As Humility and Self-emptineſs made *David* go out of himſelf, to ſeek Satisfaction in God; and having found it, he Boaſts and Triumphs, ſo there were none capable of underſtanding his Triumph, or partaking with him in his Delights, but the humble Souls. Now you may perceive, how far this Boaſting here ſpoken of, is degenerated from that, and ſo how far Man's Nature is ſpoiled. *Boaſt not thyſelf*, &c. The true Boaſting we were created unto, hath a ſufficient Foundation, even ſuch as will bear the Weight of Triumph; but that which Mens Spirits are now naturally ſet upon, cannot carry, cannot ſound ſuch Gloriation, and therefore this Boaſting makes Men rediculous. If you ſaw a Man Glorying in Rags, ſetting forth himſelf to be admired in them, or Boaſting in ſome vain deſpicable and baſe Thing, you would pity him, or laugh at him as one diſtempered. The Truth is, the natural Man is mad, hath loſt his Judgment, and is under the greateſt Diſtraction imaginable ſince the Fall: That Fall hath troubled his Brains, and they are never ſettled, till the new Creation come to put all right again, and compoſe the Heart of Man. I ſay, all other Diſtractions are but particular, in reſpect to particular Things: But there is a general Diſtraction over all Mankind, in Reference to Things of moſt general and moſt eternal Concernment. Now, Fools and mad Perſons, they retain the ſame Affections and Paſſions that are in Men, as Anger, Love, Hatred, Grief, Joy, &c. but it is ſo much the worſe, ſince the Judgment, which is the only Directive and Guide of them, is troub-

troubled: Now they are ſet on wrong Objects, they run at Random, and are under no Kind of Rule, and ſo they hurry the poor Man, and put him in a pitiful Caſe. Now indeed ſo it is with us, ſince Sin entered, the Soul is wholly turned off God, the only true Object of Delight, in which only there can be ſolid Gloriation. The Mind of Man is blinded, and his Paſſions are ſtrong, and ſo they are now ſpent upon empty Vanities, and carried Head-long without Judgment. Oftentimes he glories in that which is his Shame, and boaſts in that which is his Sin, and which will cauſe nothing but Shame, the more Weight be laid upon it. There is in Man an Oblivion and Forgetfulneſs of God, and in this Darkneſs of the Ignorance of God, every Thing is apprehended or miſapprehended as preſent Senſe ſuggeſts, and as it fancies a Conveniency or Excellency; thither the Soul is carried as if it were ſomething, and then it is but the Eaſt Wind. There is nothing beſide God that is a fit Matter of Boaſting, becauſe it lacks one of the eſſential Ingredients; either it is not ſuitable to the Soul, or it is not truly our own; there wants either Proportion to the vaſt Capacity and Void of our Deſires, and ſo cannot fill up that really, but only in a deluding Dream or Imagination, and therefore will certainly make the Iſſue rather Vexation than Gloriation, or there wants Property and Intereſt in them; for they are changeable and periſhing in their own Nature, and by divine Appointment, that they cannot be conceived to be the proper Good of the immortal Soul; they cannot be truly our own, becauſe they will ſhortly ceaſe to be, and before they ceaſe to be, they may in a Moment ceaſe to be ours; That Ty of Intereſt is a Draw-knot, whatſoever catcheth hold of the End of it, looſeth it.

The Object of degenerate and vitious Boaſting is here held out: *Boaſt not thyſelf*, or *of thyſelf*. Whatſoever be the immediate Matter of it, this is always the ultimate and principal Object. Since Man fell from God, ſelf is the Center of all his Affections and Motions: This is the great Idol, the *Diana*, that the Heart worſhips, and all the Contention, Labour, Clamour, and Care that is among Men, is about her Silver Shrines, ſo to ſpeak, ſomething relating to the adorning or ſetting forth this Idol. It is true, ſince the Heart is turned from that direct Subordination to God, the Affections are ſcattered and parted into infinite Channels, and run towards innumerable Objects, for the Want of that original Unity, which comprehends in its Boſom univerſal Plenty, muſt needs breed infinite Variety, to ſupply the inſatiable Appetite of the Soul. And this might be enough to convince you, that your Souls are quite out of Courſe, and altogether wandered from the Way of Happineſs, becauſe they are poured out on ſuch a Multiplicity of unſufficient, unſatisfying Things, every one of which is narrow, limited and empty, and the Combination and Concurrence of all, being a Thing either impoſſible or improbable to be attained. But we may conceive, that Men's Affections part themſelves into three great Heads of created Things: One of which runs towards the Goods or Perfections of the Mind; another towards the Goods or Advantages of the Body; and a Third towards thoſe Things that are without us, *bona fortunæ*, Riches and Honour, *&c.* Now each of theſe ſend out many Streams and Rivulets as ſo many Branches from it; but all of them, tho' they

ſeem

ſeem to have a direct Courſe towards other Things, yet they wind about and make a circular Progreſs to the great Ocean of Self-eſtimation, whence they iſſued at firſt. You may find all of thoſe, *Jer.* ix. 23. falling under a divine Interdiction and Curſe, as being oppoſite to glorying in God. While Men reflect within themſelves, and behold ſome Induements and Abilities in their Minds beyond other Men, of which Wiſdom is the Principal, and here ſtands for all inward Advantages or Qualifications of the Soul: In that ſecret Reflection and Compariſon, there is a tacite Gloriation, which yet is a loud Blaſphemy in God's Ears. It is impoſſible almoſt for a Man to recognoſce and review his own Parts, ſuch as Engine, Memory, Underſtanding, Sharpneſs of Wit, Readineſs of Expreſſion, Goodneſs and Gentleneſs of Nature, but that in ſuch a Review, the Soul muſt be puft up, apprehending ſome Excellency beyond other Men, and taking Complacency in it, which are the two Acts of Robbery that are in Gloriation and Boaſting. Commonly this ariſes from unequal Compariſons; we pleaſe ourſelves that we are *deterioribus meliores*, better than the worſt, and build Self-eſtimation upon the Ruins of other Men's Diſadvantages, as if it were any Point of Praiſe in us that they are worſe; like Men that ſtand upon a Height, and meaſure their own Altitude, not from their juſt intrinſick Quantity, but taking the Advantage of the Bottom, whereby we deceive our own ſelves. I remember a Word of *Solomon*'s, that imports how dangerous a Thing it is for a Man to reflect upon, or ſearch into his own Glory, *Prov.* xxv. 27. *It is not good to eat much Honey: So for Men to ſearch their own Glory, is not Glory.* To ſurfeit in the Exceſs of Honey or ſweet Things, drives to Vomit, and cloys the Stomach, *Ver.* 16. Tho' it be ſweet, there is great need, yea, the more need of Caution and Moderation about it; ſo, for a Man either to ſearch into his own Breaſt, and reflect upon his own Excellencies, to find Matter of Gloriation, or ſtudiouſly to affect it among others, and enquire into other Men's Account and Eſteem of him, it is no Glory, it is a dangerous and ſhameful Folly. Now this is not only incident to natural Spirits, upon their Conſideration of their own Advantages, but even to the moſt gracious, upon the Review of ſpiritual Enduements and Prerogatives: It is ſuch a ſubtile and inſinuating Poiſon, that it ſpreads univerſally, and infects the moſt precious Ointments of the Soul, and, as it were, poiſons the very Antidote and Counterpoiſon; ſo forcible is this that was firſt dropped into Man's Nature by Satan's Envy, that it diffuſes itſelf even into Humility, and Humiliation itſelf, and makes a Man proud becauſe of Humility. The Apoſtle found need to caveat this, *Rom.* xi. 18, 19, 20. *Boaſt not, be not high minded, but fear, thou ſtandeſt by Faith.* And Chap. xii. 16. *Mind not high Things; be not wiſe in your own Conceits.* And 1 Cor. viii. 2. *If any Man think that he knoweth any Thing, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know.* All which gives us a plain Demonſtration of this, that Self-gloriation and Complacency, in Reflection upon ourſelves, is both the greateſt Ignorance, and the worſt Sacrilege. It is an Argument of greater Ignorance for a Man to think he knows, than not to know indeed: It is the worſt and moſt dangerous Ignorance, to have ſuch an Opinion of our Knowledge, Gifts, and Graces; for that puffs up, ſwells with

with empty Wind, and makes a vain Tumor: And then it is great Sacrilege, a robbing of the Honour that is due to God. *For what haſt thou that thou haſt not received.* That appropriating of theſe Things to ourſelves as ours, is an impropriating of them from their right Owner, that is, God, 1 *Cor.* iv. 7. For if thou did apprehend that thou receiveſt it, where then is glorying? I would deſire then, that whenever you happen to reflect upon yourſelves, and obſerve any Advantage either natural or ſpiritual in yourſelves, that you may think this Word ſounds from Heaven, *Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord. Let not the wiſe Man glory in his Wiſdom*; and ſo not the learned Man in his Learning, nor the eloquent Man in his Speaking, nor the ingenious Man in his Quickneſs, nor the good Man in his Goodneſs: All theſe Things, tho' ſweet, yet will ſurfeit; Gloriation in them is neither Glory nor Gain, neither honourable nor profitable.

Then, the Stream of Gloriation flows in the Channel of bodily Gifts, as Might, Strength of Body, Beauty and Comelineſs of Parts, and other ſuch Endowments; which, beſides that it is as irrational as the former in a ſacreligious Impropriation of the moſt free and arbitrary Gifts of God to ourſelves, it is withal abſurd, in that it is not ſo truly ourſelves: Theſe bodily Ornaments and Endowments do not perfect or better a Man as a Man They are but the alterable Qualities of the Veſſel or Tabernacle of a Man, in which other baſer Creatures may far excel him. How many comely and beautiful Souls are lodged within obſcure and ugly Cottages of Bodies of Clay, which will be taken down? And the great Advantage is, that the Soul of a Man, which is a Man, cannot be defiled from without, that is, from the Body, tho' never ſo loathſome or deformed; the vileſt Body cannot mar the Soul's Beauty. But then, on the other Hand, the moſt beautiful Body is defiled and deformed by the Filthineſs of Sin in the Soul: And O! how many deformed and ugly Souls dwell into beautiful and comely Bodies, which truly is no other Thing than a Devil in an Image well carved and painted. Chriſtians, you had need to correct this within you, even a Self-complacency, joined with deſpiſing of others in the Conſideration of theſe external Gifts God hath given you. What an abominable Thing is it to caſt up in Reproach, or in your Hearts to deſpiſe any other for natural Imperfections, ſuch as Blindneſs, Lameneſs, Deformity, or ſuch like? Let that Word ſound always in your Ears, *Who made thee to differ from another? Boaſt not thyſelf*, &c. But there is as ſtrong a Stream runs in the third Channel as in any; Gloriation ariſing from theſe outward and extrinſick Differences that the Providence of God makes among Men, ſuch as Riches, Honour, Gain, *&c.* You find ſuch Men, *Pſal.* xlix. 6. *Prov.* xviii. 11. and x. 15. That which a godly Man makes the Name of the Lord, that is, the Ground and Foundation of his Confidence for preſent and future Times, that the moſt Part of Men make their Riches, that is, their ſtrong City, and their high Wall, their Hope and Expectation is repoſed within it. This is the Tower, or Wall of Defence againſt the Injuries and Calamities of the Times, which moſt Part of Men are building, and if it go up quickly, if they can get theſe ſeveral Stones or Pieces of Gain ſcraped together into a Heap, they ſtrrightway imagine themſelves ſafe, as under a high Wall: But there is no

Truth in it, it is all but in their Imagination; and therefore it comes often down about their Ears, and offends them, instead of being a Defence. Let a Man creep, as it were, from off the Ground where the Poor ly, and get some Advantage of Ground above them, or be exalted to some Dignity or Office, and so set by the Shoulders higher than the rest of the People, or yet grow in some more Abundance of the Things of this Life; and strange it is, what a Vanity or Tumour or Mind instantly follows: He presently thinks himself Somebody, and forgetting either who is above him, to whom all are Worms creeping and crawling on the Footstool; or what a sandy Foundation he stands upon himself: He begins to take some secret Complacency in himself, and to look down upon others below him: He applauds, as it were, unto himself, and takes it in evil Part to want the Approbation and *Plaudite* of others: Then he cannot so well endure *Effronts* and *Injuries* as before; he is not so meek and condescending to his Equals or Inferiors. While he was Poor he used Intreaties, but *now he answers roughly*, Prov. xviii. 23. as *Solomon* gives the Character of him. How many vain and empty Gloriations are there about the Point of Birth and Place, and what foolish Contentions about these, as if it were Children struggling among themselves about the Order and Rank. There is no Worth in these Things, but what Fancy and Custom impose upon them; and yet poor Creatures boast in these empty Things. The Gentlemen despise Citizens, the Citizens contemn the poor Country-men, and yet their Bloods in a Bason have no different Colours, for all this hot Contention about Blood and Birth. *Boast not of thyself.* Nay, to speak properly, this is not thyself. *Qui genus laudat suum, aliena jactat.* Such Parents, and such a House is nothing of thy own; these are meer extrinsick Things, which are neither an Honour to unworthy Men, nor a Disgrace to one who is worthy.

You see, Beloved in the Lord, what is now the natural Posture or Inclination of our Souls in this degenerate and fallen Estate; as the Rivers of Paradise have changed their Channels and Course since the Fall, so hath Man's Affections, and so hath his Gloriation; so that it may be truly said, that our Glory is our Shame and not our Glory. Many glory in Iniquity and Sin, *Psal.* x. 3. and xciv. 4. but that shall undoubtedly be their Shame and Confusion before Men and Angels. How many godless Persons will glory in swearing hainous and deep Oaths, and some have contended about the Victory in it? You account it a Point of Gallantry; but this Triumph is like the Devils in Hell upon the devouring of Souls. Some boast of drinking, and being able to drink others under the Table: But we should be humbled and mourn for such Abominations. Certain I am, that many boast of wicked Designs, and malicious Projects against their Neighbours; If they can accomplish them: They account their Glory not to take a Wrong without giving a greater, nor to suffer an evil Word, without twenty worse in Recompence. Alas, this Boasting will one Day be turned into Gnashing of Teeth, and this Gloriation into that gnawing and ever-tormenting Worm of Conscience. *And what will ye do in the Day of that Visitation? And where shall be your Glory?* But the most Part glory and boast in Things that profit not, and will become their Shame, because they glory in them,

them, that is, these Gifts of God, outward or inward, temporal or spiritual, wherein there is any Advancement above others; unto whom I would seriously commend this Sentence to be pondered duly, *Boast not of thyself.* Whatsoever thou art, or whatsoever thou hast, boast not of thyself for it, think not much of thyself because of it. Tho' there be a Difference in God's Donation, yet let there be none in thy Self-estimation. Hath thou more Wisdom and Pregnancy of Wit, or more Learning than another? Think not more of thy self for that, than thou thinkest of the Ignorant and Unlearned who want it. Have that same Reflection upon thine own Unworthiness, that thou would think reasonable another that wants these Endowments should have. Is there a greater Measure of Grace in thee, boast not, reckon of thyself as abstracted and denuded of that: And let it not add to thy Value or Account it thyself, put not in that to make it Down-weight, and to make thee prefer thyself secretly to another. Whether it be some larger Fortune in the World, or some higher Place and Station among Men, or some Abilities and Perfections of Body or Mind, which may entice thee secretly to kiss thy Hand, and bow down to thy self; yet remember that thou boast not, glory not in any Thing but in the Lord: Let nothing of that Kind conciliate more Affection to thyself, or more Contempt toward others. Let not any Thing of that Kind be the Rule of thy self-judging, but rather entertain the View of the other Side of thyself, that is the worst, and keep that most in thy Eye, that thou may only glory in God. If thou be a Gentleman, labour to be as humble in Heart as thou thinkest a Country Man or poor Tenant should be: If thou be a Scholar, be as low in thy own Sight as the Unlearned should be; if rich, count not thyself any whit better than the Poor: Yea, the higher God set thee in Place or Parts, the lower thou ought to set thyself. *Boast not of thyself,* for any Thing in thyself, or belonging to thyself; for the Property of all Good is taken from us since the Fall, and it is fallen in God's Hand since we forfeited it, and there is nothing now properly ours but Evil, that is ourself.

SERMON VII.

Prov. xxvii. 1. *Boast not thyself of To-morrow, for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.*

AS Man is naturally given to Boasting and Gloriation in something (for the Heart cannot want some Object to rest upon and take Complacency into, it is framed with such a Capacity of employing other Things,) so there is a strong Inclination in Man towards the Time to come, he hath an immortal

Appetite, and an Appetite of Immortality; and therefore his Desires usually stretch farther than the present Hour: And the more Knowledge he hath above other Creatures, the more Providence he hath and Foresight of the Time to come. And so he often anticipates future Things by present Joy and Rejoicing in them, as he accelerates in a Manner by his earnest Desires and Endeavours after them. Now, if the Soul of Man were in the primitive Integrity, and had as clear and piercing an Eye of Understanding as once it had, this Providence of the Soul would reach to the furthest Period in Time, that is, to Eternity, which is the only just Measure of the Endurance of any immortal Spirit. But since the Eye of Man's Understanding is Darkness, and his Soul disordered, he cannot see afar off, nor so clearly by far. He is now, as you say, Sand-blind, can see nothing at such a Distance as beyond the Bounds of Time, can see nothing but at Hand, *To-morrow*; this is the narrow Sphere of poor Man's Comprehension: All he can attain unto is to be provident for the present Time: I call it all present, even that which is to come of our Time, because, in Regard of Eternity it hath no Parts, it hath no Flux or Succession, it is so soon cut off as a Moment, as the Twinkling of an Eye; and so, tho' a Man could see the End of it, it is but a short and dim Sight, it is as if a Man could only behold that which is almost contiguous with his Eye. These then are the two great Ruins and Decays of the Nature of Man: He is degenerated from God to created Things, and seeks his Joy and Rest in them, in which there is nothing but the contrary, that is, Vexation. And then he is fallen from Apprehension of Eternity, and the poor Soul is confined within the narrow Bounds of Time: So that now all his Providence is to lay up some perishing Things for some few Revolutions of the Sun, for some few Morrows, after which, tho' an endless Morrow ensue, yet he perceives it not, and provides not for it; and all his glorying and boasting is only upon some presumptuous Confidence and ungrounded Assurance of the Stability of these Things for the Time to come, which the wise Man finding much Folly in, he leaves us this Counsel, *Boast not thyself of Tomorrow*, with a most pungent Reason, taken partly from the Instability and Inconstancy of all these outward Things, in which Men fancy an Eternity of Joy, and partly from the Ignorance we have of the future Events, *For thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.*

This Boasting is an Evil so predominant among Men, that I know not any more universal in its Dominion, or more hurtful to us, or displeasing to God. If it could be so emboweled unto you, as that you might truly discern the many monstrous Conceptions of Atheism and Irreligion that are in it, it were worth the while: But I shall not digress upon the general Head, I had rather keep within the Limits of the Text. Self-boasting, you see, is that which is here condemned, and the very Name is almost enough to condemn the Nature of it. But there is another Particular added to restrict that, *of To-morrow*. Of all Boastings the most irrational and groundless is that which arises from Presumption of future Things, which are so uncertain both in themselves and to us.

It is worth the Observation, that whatever be the immediate and particular Matter and Occasion of Men's Gloriation, yet *Self* is the great and ultimate Object of it: It is *Self* that Men glory into, what-

whatsoever created Thing be the Reason or Occasion of it. *Boast not thyself of To-morrow.* Here we might stand and take a Look of the Crookedness and Perverseness of Man's Spirit since his Departure from God. Self-love and Pride were the first Poison that the Malice of Satan dropped into Man's Nature, and this is so strong and pestilent, that it has spread through the whole of Mankind, and the whole in every Man. Every one is infected, and all in every one. What are all the disordered Affections in Men, but so many Streams from this Fountain? And from these do Men's Affections flow next: So that there is nothing left uncorrupted, and free of this abominable and vile Ingredient; all flowing from Self and returning to it again, which is both sacrilegious and unnatural. There is hainous Sacrilege in it, the spoiling of the glorious divine Majesty of his undubitable Prerogative and incommunicable Right of all the Glory and Honour of his Creature. There is no Usurpation like this, for the Worm that crawls on the Footstool, to creep up to the Throne, and, as it were, to king it there, to deify and adore itself, and gather in all the Tribute of Praise and Glory and Love, that is only due to the Lord God Almighty, and invert and unpropriate these to ourselves, which is, as if the Ax should boast itself, as if it were no Iron, or the Staff, as if it were no Timber. Hence it is, that of all Evils in Man's Nature, God hath the most perfect Antipathy and direct Opposition against Pride and Self-love, because it is Sacrilege and Idolatry in the highest Manner; it strikes at the Sovereignty and Honour of God's Name, which is dear to him as himself; it sets up a vile Idol in the choicest Temple of God, that is, in the Heart; and this is the Abomination of Desolation. Other Evils strike against his holy Will: But this peculiarly points at the very Nature and Being of the most high God, and so it is with Child of Blasphemy; Atheism is the very Heart and Life of it. And then it is most unnatural, and so monstrous and deformed. For, consider all the Creation, tho' every one of them have particular Inclinations towards their own proper Ends, and so a Happiness suitable to their own Nature; yet how divers, how contrary soever they be, there is no Selfishness in them: They all concur and conspire to the Good of the whole, and the mutual Help of each other. If once that Poison should infect the material World, which hath spoiled the Spiritual, let once such a selfish Disposition or Inclination possess any Part of the World, and presently the Order, Harmony, Beauty, Pleasure and Profit of the whole World should be interrupted, defaced and destroyed. Let the Sun be supposed to boast itself of its Light and Influence, and so disdain to impart it to the lower World, and all would run into Confusion. Again, I desire you but to take a View of this Humour in another's Person; (for we are more ready to see others Evils than our own) and how deformed is it? So vile is self-seeking and self-boasting, that all Men loath it in others, and hide it from others. It disgraces all Actions, how beautiful soever: It is the very Bane of humane Society, that which looses all the Links of it, and makes them cross and thwart one another.

But, alas, how much more easy is it, to paint out such an Evil in a deformed Visage, than to discern it in ourselves? And how many will hate it in the Picture, who love and entertain it in their

their own Persons; such Deceitfulness is intermingled with most desperate Wickedness. I verily believe that is the Predominant of every Man good and bad, except in as far as it is mortified by Grace. O! the Turnings and Windings of the Heart upon itself, in all the most apparently direct Motions towards God and the Good of Men! What serpentine and crooked Circumgirations and Reflections are there in the Soul of Man, when the outward Action and Expression seems most regular, and directed towards God's Glory and others Edification? Whoever of you have any Acquaintance with your own Spirits, cannot but know this, and be ashamed and confounded at the very Thought of it. Self-boasting, Self-complacency, Self-seeking, all those being of Kin one to another, are insinuated into your best Notions, and infect them with more Atheism before God, than the strongest pious Affection can instill of Goodness into them. How often will Men's Actions and Expressions be outwardly cloathed with a Habit of Condescendency and Self-denial? And many may declaim with such Zeal and Vehemency against this Evil, and yet *latet anguis*, the Serpent is in the Bosom, and his Venom may be diffused into the Heart, and the Poison of Self-seeking and Self-boasting may run thro' the Veins of humble-like Carriage and passionate Discourses for Self-denial. O that we could above all Things establish that fundamental Principle of Christianity in our Hearts, even as we would be his Disciples, truly and sincerely, and not in outward Resemblance, to deny ourselves, to renounce ourselves and our Lusts, to make a whole Resignation of our Love, Will, Glory, and all to him, in whom to be lost it is only truly to find ourselves.

But, tho' Man have this strange Self-idolizing Humour, and a Self-glorying Disposition, yet he is so poor and beggarly a Creature, that he hath not sufficient Matter within himself to give Complacency to his Heart; therefore he must borrow from all external Things; and when there is any Kind of Propriety in, or Title to them, then he glories in himself for them, as if they were truly in himself. We are Creatures by Nature most indigent, yet most proud, which is unnatural. No Man is satisfied within himself (except the good Man, *Prov.* xiv. 14.) but he goes Abroad to seek it at the Door of every Creature, and when there are some Plumes or Feathers borrowed from other Birds, like that fooliſh Bird in the Fable, we begin to raise our Crists, and boast ourselves, as if we had all these of our own, and were beholden to none: But as Things that are truly our own, will not be sufficient to feed this Flame of Gloriation, without the Accession of outward Things: So present Things, and the present Time, will not afford Aliment enough, or Fewel for this Humour, without the Addition of the Morrow.

Boast not thyself of To-morrow. No Man's present Possession satisfies him, without the Addition of Hope and Expectation for the Future: And herein the Poverty of Man's Spirit appears, and the Emptiness of all Things we enjoy here, that our present Revenue, as it were, will not content the Heart. The present Possession fills not up the Vacuities of the Heart, without the Supply of our Imaginations, by taking so much in upon the Head of To-morrow, to speak so; as one prodigal and riotous Waster, who cannot be served with his yearly Incomes, but takes so much on upon his

his Estate, upon the next Year's Incomes before it come, begins to spend upon it, before it come itself, and then, when it comes, it cannot suffice itself; so the insatiable and indigent Heart of Man cannot subsist and feed its Joy in Complacency upon the whole World, if it were presently in its Possession, without some Accession of Hopes and Expectations for the Time to come. Therefore the Soul, as it were, anticipates and forestalls the Morrow, and borrows so much present Joy and Boasting upon the Head of it, which, when it comes itself, perhaps it will not fill the Hand of the Reaper, let be pay for that Debt of Gloriation that was taken on upon its Name, or compense the Expectation was in it. See *Job* xi. 18, 20. and viii. 13. Hope is like a Man's House to him, but to many it is no better than a Spider's Web. We have then a clear Demonstration of the Madness and Folly of Men, who hang so much upon Things without, and suffer themselves to be moulded and modelled in their Affections, according to the Variety of external Accidents. First of all, consider the Independence of all Things upon us and our Choice; there is nothing more unreasonable than to stir our Passions upon that which falls not under our Deliberation, as the most Part of Things to come are. What shall be To-morrow, what shall come of my Estate, of my Places; what Event my Projects and Designs shall have, this is not in my Hand; these depend upon other Mens Wills, Purposes and Actions, which are not in my Power: And therefore, either to boast or glory upon that which depends upon the Concurrence of so many Causes unsubordinate to me, or to be vexed and disquieted upon the Foreapprehension of that which is not in my Hand to prevent, it is not only irreligious, as contrary to our Saviour's Command, *Mat.* vi. but unreasonable also, as that which even Nature condemns: *Take not Thought for Tomorrow*; and so, by consequent, *Boast not of To-morrow*: And there's one Argument from the Vanity of such Affections, *Thou canst not make one Hair black, nor add one Cubit to thy Stature*, &c. To what Purpose then are either these Vexations or Gloriations, which cannot prevent Evil, nor procure Good? Why should our Affections depend upon other Motions? This makes a Man the greatest Slave and Captive, so that he hath not the Dominion and Power of himself. But the Vanity of such Affections is the more encreased, if we consider that Supreme Eternal Will, by which all these Things are determined; and therefore, it is in vain for Creatures to make themselves more miserable, or put themselves in a Fool's Paradise, which will produce more Misery afterwards; and that for these Things, which are bound up in that fatal Chain of his eternal Purpose. Then in the next Place, the Folly of Men appears from the Inconstancy of these Things; there is such an infinite Variety of the Accidents of Providence, that it is Folly for a Man to presume to boast of any Thing, or take Complacency in it, because many Things fall between the Cup and the Lip, the Chalice and the Chin, as the Proverb is. There is nothing certain, but that all Things are uncertain, that all Things are subject to perpetual Motion, Revolution and Change; To-day a City; To-morrow a Heap. And there is nothing between a great City and a Heap but one Day; nothing between a Man and no Man but one Hour: Our Life is subject to infinite

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Casualities; it may receive the fatal Stroke from the meaneſt Thing, and moſt unexpected; it is a Bubble flotting upon the Water; for this World is a watery Element, in continual Motion with Storms, and in theſe, ſo many poor dying Creatures riſe up, and ſwim and float a while, and are toſſed up and down by the Wind and Wave, and the leaſt Puff of Wind, or Drop of Rain, ſends it back to its own Element: We are a Vapour appearing for a very little Time, a Creature of no Solidity, a Dream, a Shadow and Appearance of ſomething; and this Dream or Apparition is but for a little Time, and then it evaniſheth, not ſo much into nothing, for it was little diſtant from nothing before, but it diſappears rather. All human Affairs are like the Spaiks of a Wheel, in ſuch a continual Circumgiration, as a captive King who was drawing *Seſoſtris*'s Chariot, ſaid, when he was looking often behind him, the King of *Egypt*, *Seſoſtris*, demanded, for what End did he look ſo often about him? Says he, I am looking to the Wheel, muſing upon the Viciſſitudes and Permutations of it, how the higheſt Parts are inſtantly the loweſt; and this Word repreſſed the King's vain Glory. Now, in this conſtant wheeling of outward Things, which is the Soul that enjoys true Quiet and Peace, even that Soul that is fixed, as it were in the Center upon God, that hath its Abode in him; tho' the Parts without be in a continual violent Motion, yet the Center of the Wheel is at much Peace, is not violently turned, but gently complies to the Changes of the other. And then conſider the Madneſs of this, *Thou knoweſt not*, &c. There are two Reaſons in the Things themſelves, Inconſtancy, and Independency on us; but this is as preſſing as any, our Ignorance of them; they are wholly in the Dark to us, as it were in the lower Parts of the Earth. As there is no more in our Power, but the preſent Hour; for to Yeſterday we are dead already, for it is paſt and cannot return, it is as it were buried in the Grave of Oblivion; and To-moorow, we are not yet born, for it is not come to the Light, and we know not if ever it will come; ſo there is no more in our Knowledge, but the preſent Hour. The Time paſt, tho' we remember it, yet it is without our practical Knowledge, it admits of no Reformation by it: And the Time to come, it is not born to us, and 'tis all one as if we were not born to it. And indeed, in the Lord's diſpoſing of all Affairs under the Sun, after this Method, there is infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs both, tho' at the firſt View, Men would think it better, that all Things went on after an uniform Manner, and that Men knew what were to befal them; yet I ſay, God hath herein provided for his own Glory and the Good of Men: His own Glory, while he hath reſerved to himſelf, the abſolute Dominion, and perfect Knowledge of his Works, and exerciſes them in ſo great Variety, that they may be ſeen to proceed from him; and for our Good, for what Place were there for the Exerciſe of many Chriſtian Virtues and Graces, if it were not ſo? What Place for Patience, if there were no croſs Diſpenſations? What Place for Moderation, if there were no Proſperity? If there were not ſuch Variety and Viciſſitude, how ſhould the Evenneſs and Conſtancy of the Spirit be known? Where ſhould Contentment and Tranquility of Mind have Place? For it is a Calm in a Storm properly, not a Calm in a Calm,

Calm, that is no Virtue. If the ſeveral Accidents of Providence were foreſeen by us, what a marvelous Perturbation and Diſorder would it make in our Duty? Who would do his Duty out of Conſcience to God's Command, to commit Events to him? Now, there is the Trial of Obedience, *to make us go by a Way we know not*, and reſign ourſelves to the *all-ſeeing Providence, whoſe Eyes run too and fro throughout the Earth.* Therefore, that no Grace may want Matter and Occaſion of Exerciſe; that no Virtue may die out for Want of Fewel, or ruſt for lack of Exerciſe, God hath thus ordered and diſpoſed the World. There is no Condition, no Poſture of Affairs, in which he hath not left a fair Opportunity, for the exerciſing of ſome Grace. Hath he ſhut up and precluded the acting of one or many through Affliction, then ſurely he hath opened a wide Door, and given large Matter for Self-denial, Humility, Patience, Moderation; and theſe are as precious, as any that look faireſt. In a Word, I think the very Frame and Method of the diſpoſing of this material World, ſpeaks aloud to this Purpoſe. You ſee, when you look below, there is nothing ſeen but the Outſide of the Earth, the very Surface of it only appears, and there your Sight is terminated; but look above, and there is no Termination, no Bounding of the Sight, there are infinite Spaces, all are tranſparent and clear without and within. Now, what may this preſent unto us? One ſays, it ſhews us that our Affections ſhould be ſet upon Things above, and not on Things below, ſeeing below there is nothing but an outward Appearance and Surface of Things, the Glory and Beauty of the Earth is but Skin deep; but heavenly Things are alike throughout all tranſparent, nothing to ſet Bounds to the Affections, they are infinite, and you may enlarge infinitely towards them. I add this other Conſideration, that God hath made all Things in Time, dark and opake, like the Earth: Look to them, you ſee only the Outſide of them, the preſent Hour, and what is beyond it you know no more than you ſee the Bowels of the Earth: But Eternity is both Tranſparent and Conſpicuous throughout, and infinite too. Therefore God hath made us blind to the one, that we ſhould not ſet our Heart, nor terminate our Eyes upon any Thing here; but he hath opened and ſpread Eternity before us in the Scriptures, ſo that you may read and underſtand your Fortune, your everlaſting Eſtate in it. He hath ſhut up temporal Things and ſealed them, and wills us to live implicitely, and give him the Truſt of them without anxious Foreſight; but Eternity he hath unvailed and opened unto us. Certain it is, that no Man till he be fully poſſeſſed of God, who is an all-ſufficient Good, *Pſal.* iv. can find any Satisfaction in any preſent Enjoyment, without the Addition of ſome Hope for the future. Great Things without it will not content; for what is it all to a Man, if he have no Aſſurance for the Time to come, and mean Things with it will content. Great Things with little Hope and Expectation, fill with more Vexation inſtead of Joy; and the greater they be, this is the more increaſed. Again, mean and low Things, with great Hopes and large Expectations, will give more Satisfaction; therefore, all Mankind have a Look towards the Morrow, and labour to ſupply their preſent Defects and Wants, with Hope or Confidence of that. I would exhort you

who would indeed have ſolid Matter of Gloriation, and would not be befooled into a golden Dream of vain Expectations of vain Things, that ye would labour to fill up the Vacuities of preſent Things, with that great Hope, the Hope of Salvation, which will be as an Helmet to keep your Head ſafe in all Difficulties; 1 *Pet.* i. 3. *Heb.* vi 18, 19. *Rom.* v. 5. It is true, other Mens Expectations of Gain and Credit, and ſuch Things, do in ſome Meaſure, abate the Torment and Pain of preſent Wants and Indigencies: But certain it is, that ſuch Hope is not ſo ſovereign a Cordial to the Heart, as to expel all Grief, but leaves much Vexation within; but then alſo, the frequent Diſappointment of ſuch Projects and Deſigns of Gain, Honour and Pleaſure, and the extreme Unanſwerableneſs of theſe to the Deſires and Hopes of the Soul, even when attained, muſt needs breed infinite more Anxiety and Vexation in the Spirit, than the Hope of them could give of Satisfaction; yea, the more the Expectation was, it cannot chooſe, but the greater Shame and Confuſion muſt be. Therefore, if you would have your Souls truly eſtabliſhed, and not hanging upon the Morrow uncertainly, as the moſt Part of Men are, get a Look beyond the Morrow, unto that everlaſting Day of Eternity, that hath no Morrow after it; *And ſee what Foundation you can lay up for that Time to come*, as *Paul* bids *Timothy* counſel the rich Men in the World, who thought their Riches and Revenues, their Offices and Dignities, a Foundation and Well-ſpring of Contentment to them and their Children, and are ready to ſay with that Man in the Parable, *Soul take thy Reſt, thou haſt enough laid up for many Years. Charge them,* (ſays he) &c. 1 *Tim.* vi. 16, 17, 18, 19. O! a Charge worthy to be engraven on the Tables of our Hearts; worthy to be written on the Ports of all Cities, and the Gates of all Palaces. You would all have a Foundation of laſting Joy, ſays he; but why ſeek you laſting Joy in fading Things? and certain Joy in uncertain Riches, and ſolid Contentment in empty Things, and not rather in the living God, who is the inexhauſted Spring of all good Things? Therefore, if you would truly boaſt of To-morrow, or ſing a ſolid Requiem to your own Hearts, there is another Treaſure to be laid up in Store againſt the Time to come; the Time only worthy to be called Time, that is Eternity; and that is, ſtudy to do Good, and be rich in good Works, in Works of Piety, of Mercy, of Equity, of Sobriety. This is a better Foundation for the Time to come; or, rather receive and embrace the Promiſe of eternal Life, made to ſuch, that free and gracious Promiſe of Life in the Goſpel; and ſo you may ſupply all the Wants and Indigencies of your preſent Enjoyments, with the precious Hope of eternal Life which cannot make aſhamed. But what is the Way that the moſt Part of Men take to mitigate and ſweeten their preſent Hardſhips? Even like that of the Fools in the Parable, *Luke* xii. They either have ſomething laid up for many Years, or elſe their Projects and Deſigns reach to many Years: The Truth is, they have more Pleaſure in the Expectation of ſuch Things, nor in the real Poſſeſſion, but that Pleaſure is but imaginary either. How many Thoughts and Deſigns are continually turning in the Heart of Man, how to be rich, how to get greater Gain, or more Credit: Men build Caſtles in the Air, and fancy to themſelves, as it were,

were, new Worlds of meer possible Beings; and in such an Employment of the Heart, there is some poor deceiving of present Sorrows, but at length they recur with greater Violence. Every Man makes *Romances* for himself, pretty Fancies of his own Fortune, as if he had the disposing of it himself; he sits down, as it were, and writes an Almanack and Prognostication in his own secret Thoughts, and designs his own Prosperity, Gain and Advantage, and Pleasures or Joys; and when we have thus ranked our Hopes and Expectation, then we begin to take Complacency in them, and boast ourselves in the Confidence of them, as if there were not a supreme Lord who gives a Law to our Affairs, as immediately, as to the Winds and Rains.

Now, that you may know the Folly of this, consider the Reason which is subjoined, *For thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.* There is a Concurrence of Inconstancy in all Things, and Ignorance in us, which might be sufficient to check our Folly of confident and presumptuous Expectation from them, and Gloriation in them: So that, whether we look about us to the Things themselves, or within us to ourselves, all Things proclaim the Folly and Madness of that which the Heart of Man is set upon. And this double Consideration the Apostle *James* opposes to the vain Hopes and confident Undertakings of Men, *Chap.* iv. 13, *&c.* Which Place is a perfect Commentary upon this Text: He brings in an Instance of the Resolutions and Purposes of rich Men, for the compassing of Gain by Merchandise, whereby you may understand all the several Designs and Plots of Men, that are contrived and ordered, and laid down in the Hearts of Men, either for more Gain, or more Glory, or more Pleasure and Ease. Now, the grand Evil that is here reproved, is not simply Mens Care and Diligence in using lawful Means for their Accommodation in this Life, or yet their wise and prudent Foresight in ordering of their Affairs for attaining that End, for both these are frequently recommended and commended by the wise Man, *Prov.* vi. 6. and xxiv 27. But here is the great Iniquity, that Men in all these Contrivings and Actings, carry themselves as if they were absolute Independents, without Consideration of the sovereign universal Dominion of God. No Man almost reflects upon that glorious Being, which alone hath the negative and definitive Sentence in all the Motions and Affairs of the Sons of Men, or considers, that it is not in Man that walks to direct his Paths; that when all our Thoughts and Designs are marshalled and ordered, and the completest Preparation made for reaching our intended Ends, that yet the Way of Man is not in himself, that all these Things are under a higher and more absolute Dominion of the most high God. Whose Heart doth that often sound unto? *A Man's Heart deviseth his Way, but the Lord directs his Steps*: And so is not bound by any Rule to conform his Executions to our Intentions; for he works all according to the Counsel of his own Will, and not ours; and therefore, no Wonder that the Product of our Actions do not answer our Intentions and Devices, because the supreme Rule and Measure of them is above our Power, and without our Knowledge. And therefore, tho' there were never so many Devices in the Heart of Man, never so wisely or lawfully contrived and ordered;

tho' the Mine be never so well prepared, and all ready for the fireing of it; *Let the Counsel of the Lord, that shall stand*, Prov. xix. 21. and xvi. 9. That higher Determination may blow up our best Consultations or drown them, for Man's Goings is of the Lord, how then can a Man understand his Paths, *Prov.* xx. 24. And yet the most Part of Men in all these Things lose the Remembrance of this fatal and invincible Subordination to God, and propose their own Affairs and Actions, as if themselves were to dispose of them; and when their own Resolutions and Projects seem probable, they begin to please themselves in them, in the Forethought of what they will do, or what they may have or enjoy To-morrow afterward: There is a present secret Complacency and Gloriation, without any serious reminding the absolute Dependence of all Things upon the Will of God, and their Independence upon our Counsels, without forecasting and often ruminating upon the perpetual Fluctuation and constant Inconstancy of humane Affairs; but, as if we were the supreme Moderators in Heaven and Earth, so we act and transact our own Business in a deep Forgetfulness of him who sits in Heaven, and laughs at all our Projects and Practices; and therefore, the Holy Ghost would have this secret but serious Thought to season all our other Purposes and Consultations, *If the Lord will*, &c. Whereas we ought to say and think this, it is scarce minded; and then we know not what shall be To-morrow, for our Life itself is a Vapour. Herein is a strong Argument, you lay your Designs for To-morrow, for a Year, for many Years, and yet ye know not if ye shall be To-morrow. How many Mens Projects are cast beyond that Time that is measured out in God's Counsel: And what a rediculous Thing must that be to him, if it be not done with submissive and humble Dependence on him? In a Word, Time is with Child of innumerable Things, conceived by the eternal Counsel of God; infinite and inconceivably various are these Conceptions which the Womb of Time shall at length bring forth to Light; every Day, every Hour, every Minute is travelling in Pain, as it were, and is delivered of some one Birth or another; and no Creature can open its Womb sooner, or shut it longer than the appointed and prefixed Season: There is no miscarrying as to him whose Decrees do properly conceive them, tho' to us they seem often abortive. Now, join unto this to make the Allusion full, as long as they are carried in the Womb of Time, they are hid from all the World; the Womb is a dark Lodging, and no Understanding nor Eye can pierce into it, to tell what is in it, till it break forth; and therefore, Children born are said to come to the Light; for till then, they are to us in a Cloud of Darkness, that we cannot tell what they are: So then, every Day, every Hour, every Moment is about to bring forth that which all the World is ignorant of, till they see it; and Oh that then they understood it. We know not whether the Morrow's or next Hour's Birth may be a proportioned Child, or a Monster; whether it will answer the Figure and Mould that is in our Mind, or be mishapen and deformed to our Sense. Man's Desires and Designs may be said to conceive, for they form an inward Image and Idea within themselves, to which they labour to make the Product and Birth of Time conformable; and when it answers our preconceived

conceived Form, then we rejoice as for a Man-child. But for the moſt Part it is a Monſter as to our Conception, it is an Aberration from our Rule; it is either mutilate and defective of what we deſire, or ſuperfluous or deformed which turns our Expectation into Vexation, and our Boaſting into Lamentation. But the Truth is, Time brings forth no Monſters as to the Lord's Decrees, which are the only juſt Meaſures of all Things: It may be ſaid of every Thing under the Sun, as *David* ſpeaks of himſelf in the Womb; *My Subſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in Secret, and curiouſly formed in the loweſt Parts of the Earth*, &c. *Pſal.* cxxxix. 15. His Eyes ſee all their Subſtance, yet being imperfect, and in his everlaſting Book all their Members are written; the Portraicture of every Thing is drawn there to the Life, and theſe in Continuance are faſhioned, juſt as they were written and drawn, and ſo they exactly correſpond to his Preconception of them; whatever Deformity they may have as to us, yet they are perfect Works and beautiful to him.

SERMON VIII.

Iſa. i. 10, 11. &c. *Hear the Word of the Lord ye Rulers of Sodom, give ear unto the Word of the Lord ye People of Gomorrah*, &c.

IT is ſtrange to think what Mercy is mixed with the moſt Wrath-like Strokes and Threatnings: There is no Prophet whoſe Office and Commiſſion is only for Judgment; nay, to ſpeak the Truth, it is Mercy that premiſes Threatnings. The entering of the Law, both in the Commands and Curſes, is to make Sin abound, that Grace may ſuperabound, ſo that both Rods and Threatnings are the Meſſengers of Jeſus Chriſt, to bring Sinners to him for Salvation: Every Thing ſhould be meaſured and named by its End; ſo, call Threatnings Promiſes, call Rods and Judgments Mercies; name all Good, and Good to you, if ſo be ye underſtand the Purpoſe of God in theſe. The ſhorteſt Preaching in the Bible uſeth to expreſs itſelf what it means, tho' it be never ſo terrible. This is a ſad and lamentable Beginning of a Prophet's Miniſtry; the firſt Word is *to the Heavens and to the Earth.* A weighty and horrible Regrate of this People, as if none of them were to hear, as if the Earth could be more eaſily affected than they. The Creatures are taken Witneſſes by God of their Ingratitude, and then who ſhall ſpeak for them: If Heaven and Earth be againſt them, who ſhall ſpeak Good of them? Will their own Conſcience? No certainly,

tainly, it will in the Day of witneſſing and judging precipitate its Sentence, and ſpare the Judge the Labour of Probation; a Man's Enemy ſhall be within his own Houſe, tho' now your Conſciences agree with you: Nay, why doth the Lord ſpeak to them? Becauſe the People conſider not, becauſe Conſcience have given over ſpeaking to them, therefore the Lord directs his Word to the dumb Earth: Yet how gracious is he, as to direct a ſecond Word even to the People, tho' a ſad Word? It is a Complaint of Iniquity and Backſliding, and ſuch as cannot be uttered; yet it is Mercy to challenge them, yea to chaſten them. If the Lord would threaten a Man with pure and unmixed Judgments, if he would frame a Threatning of a Rod of pure Juſtice, I think it ſhould be this, I will no more reprove thee, nor chaſten thee; and he is not far from it, when he ſays, why ſhall ye be ſtricken any more? &c. Ver. 5. As if he would ſay, it is in vain now to ſend a Rod, ye receive no Correction; I ſent the Rod, that it might open your Hearts and Ears to the Word, and ſeal your Inſtruction, but to what Purpoſe is it? Ye grow worſe and worſe: Well, the Prophet compares here Sin and Judgment, and the one far ſurmounts the other. Ye would think a deſolate Country, burnt Cities, Deſolation made by Strangers, a ſufficient Recompence of their Corruption and Miſorders, of their Forſaking and Backſliding. Ye would think now, if your preſent Condition and the Lands preſſed you to utter *Jeremiah*'s Lamentation, a ſader than which is not almoſt imaginable, ye would think, I ſay, that you had received double for all your Sins: And yet alas, how are your Iniquities of infinite more Deſert; all that were Mercy, which is behind infinite and eternal Puniſhment; that there is Room left for Complaint, it is Mercy; that there is a Remnant left, it is Mercy.

Now, to proclaim unto this People, and to convince them that their Judgment was not ſevere, he gives them one Word from God. And indeed it is ſtrange, that when the Rod is ſent, becauſe of the deſpiſing of the Word; that after the deſpiſing of both Word and Rod, another Word ſhould come. Always this Word is a convincing Word, a directing Word, and a comforting Word; theſe uſe to be conjoined, and if they be not always expreſſed, we may lawfully underſtand them: We may join a Conſolation to a Conviction, and cloſe a Threatning with a Promiſe, if we take with a Threatning: *Jonah*'s Preaching expreſſed no more but a Threatning and Denounciation of Judgment; but the People underſtood it according to God's Meaning, and made it a Rule of Direction, and ſo a Ground of Conſolation. How inexcuſable are we, who have all theſe expreſſed unto us, and often inculcated, *Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept*, and yet ſo often divides the Word of Truth, or neglects it altogether. Moſt Part fancy a Belief of the Promiſes, and neither conſider Threatnings nor Commands: Some believing the Threatnings, are not ſo wiſe for their own Salvation, as to conſider what God ſays more, but takes it for his laſt Word. Shall not *Nineveh* riſe up in Judgment againſt this Generation; they repented at one Preaching, and that a ſhort one, and in Appearance very defective; and yet we have many Preachings of the Son of God, and his Apoſtles in this Bible, both Law and Goſpel, holden forth diſtinctly, and theſe ſpoken daily

daily in our Audience, and yet we repent not.

This is a strange Preface going before this Preaching; and more strange in that it is before the first Preaching of a young Prophet. He speaks both to Rulers and People, but he gives them a Name, such as certainly they would not take to themselves; but seeing he is to speak the Word of the Lord, he must not flatter them, as they did themselves. Is not this the Lord's People, his Portion and Inheritance which he chooseth out of the Nations? Are not these Rulers the Princes of *Judah*, and the Lord's Anointed? Were they not both in Covenant with God, and separated from the Nations both in Privileges and Profession? How then are they *Rulers of Sodom, and People of Gomorrah?* Likened to the worst of the Nations, and not likened to them, but spoken of, as if they were indeed all one. When ye hear the Preface, ye would think that the Prophet were about to direct his Speech to *Sodom* and *Gommorrah*: But when ye look upon the Preaching, ye find he means by *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, and these are the Rulers and People he speaks of. Certainly, according as Men walk, so shall they be named and ranked; external Privileges and Profession may give a Name before Men, and separate Men from Men before the World; but they give no Name, make no Difference before God, if all other Things be not suitable to these. *He is not a Jew*, (saith *Paul*) *who is not one inwardly, but he who hath that Circumcision in the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter.* Outward Profession and Signs may have Praise of Men, but it is this that hath Praise of God, *Rom.* ii. 28, 29. *Circumcision and Uncircumcision, Baptism or Unbaptism availeth nothing, but a new Creature.* A baptized Christian, and an unbaptized *Turk* are alike before God, if their Hearts and Ways be one, *Gal.* vi. 15. All Christians profess Faith and Glory in Baptism, but it avails nothing, except *it work by Love*, Gal. v. 6.

Now, what Name shall we give you? How shall our Rulers be called? How shall ye the People be called? If we shall speak the Truth, we fear it instruct you not, but irritate you; yet the Truth we must speak, whether ye chuse, or whether ye refuse. Ye would all be called Christians, the People of God: But we may not call you so, except we would flatter you, and deceive you by flattering, and murder you by deceiving. We would gladly name you Christians in the Spirit, Saints chosen and precious. Oh, that we might speak so to the Rulers and People: But alas, we may not call you so, except ye were so indeed; we may not call you Christians, least ye believe yourselves to be so. And yet alas, ye will think yourselves such, speak what we can. Would ye know your Name then? I perceive you listen to hear what it is. But understand, that it is your Name before God, which bears his Account of you: What matter of a Name among Men? It is often a Shadow without Substance, a Name without the Thing. If God name you otherwise, you shall have little either Honour or Comfort in it: When Men bless you and praise you, if the Lord reckon thee among the Beasts that perish, are ye honoured indeed? Well then, hear your Name before God, what Account hath he of you? Ye Rulers, are Rulers of *Sodom*, and ye People, are People of *Gomorrah*. And if ye think this a hard

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Saying, I desire you will notice the Way that the Prophet *Isaiah* takes to prove his Challenge against them, and the same may be alledged against Rulers and People now. We need no Proof but one of both. See *Ver.* 23. Thy Princes are rebellious, because, tho' they hear much against their Sins, yet they never amend them, they pull away the Shoulder; if they hear, yet they harden their Heart. Is there any of them hath set too to pray in their Families, tho' earnestly pressed? Well, what follows? *Every one loves Gifts.* Covetousness then and Oppression proves Rulers to be Rulers of *Sodom.* *Shall their Houses stand, shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself with Cedar*, Jer. xxii. 15. No certainly, Men shall one Day take up a Proverb against them; Wo to him that encreases that which is not his, and loadeth himself with thick Clay; they shall be for Booties to the Lord's spoilers, *Hab.* ii. 6. Wo to them, for they have consulted Shame to their Houses, and sinned against their own Soul. Their Design is to establish their House, and make it eminent, but they take a compendious Way to shame and ruin it. Alas, it is too publick that Rulers seek their own Things, for themselves and their Friends; and for Jesus and his Interests, they are not concerned: But are ye the People any Whit better? Oh that it were so. But alas, when ye are involved in the same Guiltiness, I fear ye partake of their Plagues. What are ye then? *People of Gomorrah.* Is not the Name of God blasphemed daily because of you? Are not the Abominations of the Gentiles the common Disease of the Multitude, and the very Reproach of Christianity. Set apart your publick Services and Professions, and is there any Thing behind in your Conversation, but Drunkenness, Lying, Swearing, Contention, Envy, Deceit, Wrath, Covetousness, and such like? Have not the Multitude of them been as civil, and carried themselves as blamelesly, and without Offence, as the Throng of our visible Church? What have ye more than they? It is true, ye are called Christians, and ye boast in it. Ye know his Will, and can speak of Points of Religion, can teach and instruct others, and so hath, as it were, in your Minds a Form and Method of Knowledge, the best of you are but such: But I ask, as *Paul* did the *Jews* in such a Case, *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self; thou that makest a Boast of the Law, through breaking of it, dishonourest thou God*, Rom. ii. 17. &c. 23. Why then, certainly all thy Profession and Baptism avails nothing, and will never extract thee from the Pagans, with whom thou art one in Conversation; thy Profession is so far from helping thee in such a Case, that it shall be the most bitter Ingredient in thy Cup of Judgment, for it is the greatest Aggravation of thy Sin, for through it, God's Name is blasphemed; *If they had not known, they had not had Sin.* Pagan's Sin is no Sin in respect of Christians: If ye consider Christ's Sermon, *Mat.* xi. ye will say, *Isaiah* is a meek and moderate Man in regard of him; *Isaiah* calls them People of *Gomorrah*, but Christ will have them worse, and their Judgment more intolerable than theirs. And that not only the profane of them, but the civil and religious like, who believed not in him: Well then, here is the Advantage ye get of your Name of Christianity, of your Privilege of hearing his Word daily; ye who never

never ponder it, to tremble at it, or to rejoice in it, who cannot be moved either to Joy or Grief for spiritual Things; neither Law nor Gospel moves the most Part of you. I say, here is all your Gain, ye shall receive a Reward with Gentiles and Pagans; yea, ye shall be in a worse Case nor they in the Day of the Lord. The civil Christian shall be worse than the prophane Turk, and ye shall not then boast that ye were Christians, but shall desire that ye had dwelt in the Place where the Gospel had never been preached. It is a Character of the Nations, *that they call not on God*, and of Heathen Families, *that they pray not to him*, Jer. x. 25. and Wrath must be poured on them. What then are the most Part of you? Ye neither bow a Knee in secret, nor in your Families to God, your Time is otherways employed, ye have no Leisure to pray twice or thrice a Day alone, except when ye put on your Cloaths ye utter some ordinary Bablings; ye cannot be driven to Family-worship; shall not God rank you in Judgment with these heathen Families? Or shall it not be more tolerable for them nor for you? And are not the most Part of you every one given to Covetousness, your Heart and Eye after it, seeking Gain and Advantage more than the Kingdom of Heaven? Doth not every one of you, as you have Power in your Hand, oppress one another? wrong one another? Now, our End in speaking thus to you, is not to drive you to Despa-ration: No indeed, but as there was a Word of the Lord sent to such by *Isaiah*, so we bring a Word unto you. That which ruins you, is your carnal Confidence; ye are presumptuous as this People, and cry, *The Temple of the Lord*, the Work of the Lord, *&c.* as if these would save you: Know therefore, that all these will never cover you in the Day of Wrath; know there is a Necessity to make Peace with God, and your Righteousness must exceed the Righteousness of a Profession, and external Privileges and Duties, or else ye shall be as far from the Kingdom of Heaven, as *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. We speak of Rulers Sins, that ye may mourn for them, lest ye be judged with them; if ye do not mourn for them in secret, know that they are your Sins, ye are Companions with them: Many fret, grudge, and cry out against Oppression, but who weeps in secret? Who prays and deprecates God's Wrath, least it come upon them? And while it is so, the Oppression of Rulers becomes the Sin of the oppressed themselves.

Hear the Word of the Lord] It were a suitable Preparation for any Word that is spoken, to make it take Impression, if it were looked on *as the Word of the Lord*, and *Law of our God*. And truly no Man can hear aright, unless he hear it so. Why doth not this Word of the Lord return with more Fruit? Why doth not Men tremble or rejoice at it? Certainly, because it is not received as God's Word. There is a practical Heresy in our Hearts, which rather may be called Atheism; we do not believe the Scriptures. I do not say, Men call it in Question; but I say, ye believe them not. It is one Thing to believe with the Heart, another Thing not to doubt of it; ye doubt not of it, not because ye do indeed believe it, but because ye do not at all consider it. It is one Thing to confess with the Mouth, and another Thing to believe with the Heart; for ye confess the Scriptures to be God's Word, not because ye believe them, but

becauſe ye have received ſuch a Tradition from your Fathers, have heard it from the Womb unqueſtioned. Oh that this were engraven on your Heart, that theſe Commands, theſe Curſes, theſe Promiſes are divine Truths, the Words and the Oath of the holy One. If every Word of Truth came ſtamped with his Authority, and were received in the Name of God himſelf, what Influence would it have on the Spirits and the Practices of Men? This would be a great Reformer, would reform more in a Month, than Church and State hath done theſe many Years. Why are Rulers and People not converted and healed for all that is ſpoken? Here it is, *Who believes our Report?* Who believes that our Report is thy own Teſtimony, O Lord? When Miniſters threaten you in God's Name, if his Authority were ſtamped on the Threatning, if Men did ſeriouſly apprehend it were God's own Voice, would they not tremble? When the Goſpel and the joyful Sound comes forth, if ye apprehended that ſame Authority upon it, which ye who are convinced, believes in the Law, would ye not be comforted? Finally, I may ſay, it is this Point of Atheiſm, of Inconſideration and Brutiſhneſs that deſtroys the Multitude, makes all Means ineffectual to them, and retards the Progreſs of Chriſtians. Men do not conſider, that this Word is the Word of the eternal and true and faithful God, and that not one Jot of it will faill. Here is a Point of Reformation I would put you to; if ye mind indeed to reform, let this enter into your Hearts and ſink down, that the Law and Goſpel is the Word of God, and reſolve to come and hear Preachings ſo, as the Voice *of Jeſus Chriſt the true and faithful Witneſs:* If ye do not take it ſo now, yet God will judge you ſo at the End. *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me, and he that hears not you, hears not me.* If ye thought ye had to do with God every Sabbath, would ye come ſo careleſly, and be ſo ſtupid and inconſiderate before the Judge of all the Earth: But ye will find in the End, that it was God whom ye knew not.

SERMON IX.

Iſa. i. 11. *To what Purpoſe is the Multitude of your Sacrifices to me, ſaith the Lord,* &c.

THIS is the Word he calls them to hear, and a ſtrange Word. *Iſaiah* asks, What means your Sacrifices? God will not have them. I think the People would ſay in their own Hearts, what means the Prophet? What would the Lord be at? Do we any Thing but what he commanded us? Is he angry at

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us for obeying him? What means this Word? Is he not repealing the Statute and Ordinance he had made in *Israel*? If he had reproved us for Breach of Commands, for Omission and Neglect of Sacrifices, we would have taken with it; but what means this Reproof for Well-doing? The Lord is a hard Master, if we neglect Sacrifices, and offer up the worst of the Flock, he is angry: If we have a Care of them, and offer them punctually, and keep appointed Days precisely, he is angry: What shall we do to please him? I think many of you are put to as great a Non-plus, when your Prayers and Repentance and Fasting are quarreled: Do ye not say in your Hearts, we know not what to do. Ministers are angry at us if we pray not, and our Prayers they cry out against; they command us to repent and fast, and yet say, that God will abhor both these. This is a Mystery, and we shall endeavour to unfold it to you from the Word. It concerns us to know how God is pleased with our publick Services and Fastings: For the most Part of People have no more Religion. Ye all, I know, desire to know what true Religion is: Consult the Scriptures, and search them, for there ye shall find eternal Life. We frame to ourselves a wrong Pattern and Copy of it, and so we judge ourselves wrong. Our narrow Spirits do not take in the Latitude of the Scripture's Religion, but taking in one Part, it excludes another, and thinks God rigid if it be not taken off our Hand so. But I pray consider these three Things, which seem to make up the good Old Way, the Religion of the Old and New Testament. *First*, Religion takes in all the Commands, it is universal, *hath Respect to all the Commandments*, Psal. cxix. 6. It carries the two Tables in both Hands, the first Table in the right Hand, and the second in the Left. These are so entirely conjoin'd, that if you receive not both, ye cannot receive any truly. *Secondly*, It takes in all the Man, his Soul and Spirit as well as his Body; nay, it principally includes that which is Principal in the Man, *his Soul and Spirit, his Mind and Affections*. If ye divide these, ye have not a Man present but a Body; and what Fellowship can Bodies have with him who is a Spirit: If ye divide these among themselves, ye have not a Spirit indeed present: If the Mind be not present, surely the Heart cannot, but if the Mind be, and the Heart away, Religion is not Religion, but some empty Speculation: The Mind cannot serve but by the Heart: Where the Heart is, there a Man is reckoned to be. *Thirdly*, It takes in Jesus Christ as all, and excludes altogether a Man's self. *He worships God in the Spirit*, but he rejoices not in himself, and in his Spirit, *but in Jesus Christ, and hath no Confidence in himself, or the Flesh*, Phil. iii. 3, 8. It includes the Soul and Spirit, and all the Commands, but it denies them all, and embraces Jesus Christ by Faith, as the only Object of glorying into, and trusting into. All a Man's Self becomes Dross in this Consideration. Now the first of these is drawn from the last, therefore it appears first; I say, an Endeavour in walking in every Thing commanded, of conforming our Way to the present Rule and Pattern, is a Stream flowing from the pure Heart within: A Man's Soul and Affections must once be purified, or it sends out such Streams in Conversation. And from whence doth that pure Heart come? Is it the Fountain and Original? No certainly, *the Heart is desperately wicked above all Things* and how will it cleanse itself? But this Purity proceeds from another Fountain,

from Faith in Jesus Christ: And it is this that lies neareſt the uncreated Fountain, Chriſt himſelf; it is the moſt immediate Conduit, the Mouth of the Fountain, or the Bucket to draw out of the deep Wells of Salvation: All theſe are conjoined in this Order, 1 *Tim.* i. 5. *The End of the Command is Love.* Ye know Love is ſaid elſewhere to be the fulfilling of the Law: And when we ſay Love, we mean all Duties to God and Man, which Love ought immediately to principle. Now this Love proceeds from a pure Heart, cleanſed and ſanctified, which pure Heart proceeds from Faith unfeigned. So then, we muſt go up in our Searching from external Obedience all alongs, till we arrive at the inward Fountain of Chriſt dwelling in us by Faith: And then have ye found true Religion indeed. Now, ye may think poſſibly, we have uſed too much Circumlocution: What is all this to the preſent Purpoſe? Yes, very much. Ye ſhall find the Lord rejecting this People's publick Worſhip and ſolemn Ordinances upon theſe three Grounds, either they did not join with them the Obſervation of weightier Commands, or they did not worſhip him in them with their Spirits, had not Souls preſent, or they knew not the End and Uſe for which God had appointed theſe Sacrifices and Ceremonies, they did not ſee to the End of all, which was Jeſus Chriſt.

Firſt then, I ſay, the People was much in external Sacrifices and Ceremonies, commanded of God, but they were ignorant of the End of his Commands, and of the Uſe of them: Ye know in themſelves they had no Goodneſs, but only in relation to ſuch an End as he pleaſed they ſhould lead to; but they ſtayed upon the Ceremony and Shadow, and were not led to uſe it as a Means for ſuch an End; and ſo, tho' they fancied that they obeyed, and pleaſed God, yet really they wholly perverted his Meaning and Intention in the Command; therefore doth the Lord plead with them in this Place for their Sacrificing, as if it had been Murder. They uſed to object his Commands. What, ſays the Lord, did I command theſe Things? Who required them? Meaning certainly, who required them for ſuch an End, to take away your Sin? who required them but as a Shadow of the Subſtance to come? Who required them but as Signs of that Lamb and Sacrifice to be offered up in the Fulneſs of Time? And foraſmuch as ye paſs over all theſe, and think to pleaſe me with the external Ceremony, was that ever my Intent or Meaning? Certainly ye have fancied a new Law of your own, I never gave ſuch a Law; therefore it is ſaid, *Pſal.* l. 13. God pleads juſt after this Manner, *Will I eat the Fleſh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats?* &c. and *Micah* vi. 7. *Will the Lord be pleaſed with Thouſands of Rams, or with ten thouſands of Rivers of Oil?* He who hath no Pleaſure in ſinful Men, what Pleaſure can he have in Beaſts? Therefore, it was to ſignify to them, (who thought God would be pleaſed with them for their Offering,) that he could not endure them; it was worſe to him to offer him ſuch a Recompence, than if they had done none at all: He is only well pleaſed in his well-beloved Son; and when they ſeparate a Lamb or a Bullock from the well-beloved, what was it to him more *nor a Dog's Neck or Swine's Fleſh?* It was his Creature, as theſe are, and no more, *Iſa.* lxvi. 3. Now that they looked never beyond the Ceremonies, it is evident, becauſe they boaſted in them, they uſed to find out theſe

these as a Remedy of their Sins, and a Mean to pacify God's Wrath, *Micah* vi. 6. *Paul* bears witness of it, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 14. *Moses* had a Vail of Ceremonies over his Face, and the Children of *Israel* could not stedfastly look to the End of that Mystery, Christ Jesus, but their Minds were blinded, and is so to this Day in the reading of the Scriptures: And this Vail of Hardness of Heart shall be done away when Christ returns them again. Now, I say, it is just so with us, there was never a People liker other nor we are like the Jews: We have many external Ordinances, Preaching, Hearing, Baptism, Communion, Reading, Singing, Praying in Publick, extraordinary Solemnities of Fasting and Thanksgiving, Works of Discipline and Government, publick Reproof to Sinners, Confessions and Absolutions. What would ye think if we should change the Terms of Sacrifices and new Moons, and speak all this to you? To what Purpose is the Multitude of your Fasts and Feasts, of your Preachings and Communions, of your praying in secret, and in your Families, of Conference and Prayer with others, of running to and fro to hear Preaching, to partake of the Lord's Table? I am full of them, I delight not in them: When ye come here on the Sabbath, who required at your Hand to tread my Courts? Come no more to hear the Word, run no more after Communions, seek no more Baptism to your Children, call no more solemn Assemblies, it is all Iniquity. Oh say ye that is a strange Preaching indeed, must we pray no more? hear no more? sing no more? Did not God command these? why do ye discharge them? We do not mean so, that these should not be, but they should be in another Way: All these want the Soul and Life of them, which is Jesus Christ in them. Do ye not think yourselves religious, because ye frequent these? The Multitude of the People think that these please God, and pacify his Wrath: Ye have no other Thing in your Mind but these. If ye can attain any Sorrow or Grief for Sin, or any Tears to signify it, presently you absolve yourselves for your Repentance. The scandalous who appear in Publick, thinks the paying of a Penalty to the Judge, and bowing the Knee before the Congregation, satisfies God. Ye miss nothing when ye have these: I speak to the Professors of Religion also, who pretend to more Knowledge than others, when ye have gone about so many Duties, ye are well satisfied if ye get Liberty in them: If ye can satisfy yourselves, ye doubt not of God's Satisfaction; and if ye do not satisfy yourselves in your Duties, ye cannot believe his Satisfaction. Ye get the Ordinance, and miss nothing. Now, I say, in all this ye do not reach to the End of this Ministry, *Jesus Christ*, ye do not stedfastly behold him, to empty yourselves in his Bosom, to turn over all the Unrighteousness of your holy Things upon him who bears it; that which pleaseth you, is not *he in whom the Father is well pleased*, but the Measure of your own Duty. O! the establishing of our own Righteousness is the Ruin of the visible Church: This is the grand Idol, and all Sacrifice to it. Know therefore, that the most Part of your Performances are Abomination and Iniquity, because ye have so much Confidence in them, and put them not upon Christ as filthy Rags, or do not cover them with his Righteousness, as well as your Wickedness. I know ye will say, that ye are not satisfied with them, and that is still the Matter of your Exercise. Well, I affirm, in the Lord's Name,

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from that Ground, that ye have Confidence in them, for if your Diffidence and Disquietness arise from it, your Confidence and Peace must come from it also. Is there any almost that maintains Faith, except when their own Conditions please them well; and that Faith I may call no Faith, at least not pure and cleanly entire Faith. As for the Multitude of you, you must know this, that God is not pleased with your Prayers and Fasting, and Hearing, &c. because ye have such an Esteem of them, because ye can settle yourselves against all Threatnings, and never once remember of Jesus Christ, or consider the End of his Coming into the World; because ye find no Necessity of Pardon for your Prayers and Righteousness, but stretches the Garment of these over the Uncleanness of your Practices: What Delight hath the Lord in them, when they are put in his Son's Place? Will he not be jealous that his Son's Glory be not given to another?

In the *Second* Place, the Lord rejects their Performances, because there was nothing but a mere Shadow of Service, and no worshipping of God in the Spirit. Ye know what Christ saith, *God is a Spirit, and he that worships him must do it in Spirit and Truth*, John iv. 24. It is the Heart and Soul that God delights into, *My Son give me thy Heart*, for if thou give not thy Heart, I care for nothing else. The Heart is the whole Man. What a Man's Affection is, that he is. Light is not so, it brings not the Man alongs with it: Christ Jesus hath given himself for us, and he requires that we offer ourselves to him: If we offer a Body to frequent his House, our Feet to tread in his Courts, our Ears to hear his Word, what cares he for it, as long as the Soul doth not offer itself up in Prayer or Hearing. And this was the Sin of this People, *Isa.* xxix. 13. *They draw near with the Lips, and their Heart is far from the Lord.* Now are not we their Children, and have succeeded to this? Is there any Thing almost in our publick Services, but what is Publick? Is there any Thing but what is seen of Men? Ye come to hear, ye sit and hear, and is there any more? The most Part have their Minds wandering, no Thoughts present; for your Thoughts are removed about your Barns and Corns, or some Business in your Head; and if any have their Thoughts present, yet where are Affections, which are the Soul and Spirit of Religion, without which it is no true Fire but wild Fire, if it be not both burning and shining. Are ye serious in these Ordinances? Or rather, are ye not more serious in any Thing beside? And now, especially, when God's Providence calls you to earnest Thoughts, when it cries to all Men to enter into Consideration of their own Ways. I pray you, is there any Soul Affliction in your Fasts even for a Day? Is there any real Grief or Token of it? Not a Fast in Scripture without weeping: We have kept many, and have never advanced so far. Shall the Lord then be pacified? Will not his Soul abhor them? How shall they appease him for your other Provocations, when they are as Oil to the Flame, to increase his Indignation? The most Part of Christians are guilty here: We come to the Ordinances, as it were, to discharge a Custom, and perform a Ceremony, that we may have it to say to our Conscience that it is done, and there is no more Intent and Purpose. We do not seek to have Soul-communion with God: We come to Sermon to hear some new Thing, or new Truth, or new

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Fashion of it; to learn a notional Experience of Cases: But alas, this is not the great Purpose and Use of these Things; it is to have some new Sense of these Things we know: We know already, but we should come to get the Truth more received in our Love, to serve God in our Spirits, and to return to him ourselves in a Sacrifice acceptable. This is the greater half, if not the whole of Religion, Love to Jesus Christ who loved us, and living to him, because he died for us, and living to him because we love him. Now, all our Ordinances and Duties should be Channels to carry our Love to him, and Occasions of venting our Affections.

Thirdly, The Lord rejected this People's Services, because they were exact and punctual in them, and neglected other Parts of his Commandments; and this is clearly expressed here, *I will not hear your Prayers*, tho' there be many of them: Why? *Your Hands are full of Blood.* Ye come to worship me, and pray to me, and yet there are many Abominations in your Conversation, which you continue in, and do not challenge in yourselves. Ye have unclean Hands, and shall your Prayers be accepted, which should come up with pure Hands? They took his Covenant in their Mouth, and offered many Sacrifices, but what have ye to do with these Things (saith the Lord) since ye hate to be reformed, since ye hate personal Reformation of your Lives, and in your Families? What have ye to do to profess to be my People, *Psal.* l. 16, 17? The Lord requires an Universality, if ye would prove Sincerity: If ye have respect to any of his Commands, as his Commands, then will ye respect all: If ye be partial, and chuse one Duty that is easy, and refuse another harder, ye will come to the Church and hear, but ye will not pray at Home: Ye will fast in Publick, but not in Private: Then, *says the Lord*, ye do not at all obey me, but your own Humour; ye do not at all fast unto me, but unto yourselves: As much as your Interest lies in a Duty, so much are ye carried to it. And I take this to be the Reason why many are so eager in pursuing publick Ordinances, following Communions, and Conferences with God's People, ready to pray in Publick rather than alone. If ye would follow them into their secret Chamber, how much Indifferency is there? how great Infrequency, how little Fervency? Well *(says the Lord)* did ye pray to me when ye prayed among others? No, ye prayed either to yourselves, or the Company, or both. Did ye seek me in a Communion? No, *saith the Lord*, ye sought not me, but yourselves: If ye sought me indeed with others, ye would be as earnest, if not more, to seek me alone, *Zech.* vii. 6. And again, the Lord especially requires the weightier Matters of the Law to be considered, as it was among the *Jews*, their Ceremonies were commanded, and so good, but they were not so much good in themselves, as because they were Means appointed for another End and Use. But the moral Law was binding in itself, and good in itself, without relation to another Thing; and therefore Christ lays this heavy Charge to the Pharisees, *ye tithe Mint and Annise*, Mat. xxiii. 23. *Wo unto you, for ye neglect the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith, these ye ought to have done, and not left the other undone.* Are there not many who would think it a great Fault to stay away from the Church on the Sabbath or Week Day, and yet will not stick to swear, to

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drink often, *Wo unto you, for ye ſtrain at a Gnat, and ſwallow a Camel*, therefore are the Prophets full of theſe Expoſtulations. The People ſeemed to make Conſcience of Ceremonies and external Ordinances, but they did not order their Converſation aright; they did not execute Judgment, and relieve the oppreſſed, did not walk ſoberly, did not mortify ſinful Luſts, *&c.* Alas, we deceive ourſelves with the Noiſe of a Covenant, and a Cauſe of God; we cry it up as an Antidote againſt all Evils, uſe it as a Charm, even as the *Jews* did their Temple; and, in the mean Time, we do not care how we walk before God, or with our Neighbours: Well, (thus ſaith the Lord) *Truſt ye not in lying Words*, Jer. vii. 4, 5, 6. If Drunkenneſs reign among you, if Filthineſs, Swearing, Oppreſſion, Cruelty reign among you, your Covenant is but a Ly, all your Profeſſions are but lying Words, and ſhall never keep you in your Inheritances and Dwellings. The Lord tells you what he requires of you, *Is it not to do juſtly, and walk humbly with God*, Mic. vi. 7. This is that which the Grace of God teaches, *To deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly towards your God, your Neighbour and yourſelf*, Tit. ii. 11, 12. and this he prefers to your publick Ordinances, your faſting, covenanting, preaching, and ſuch like. *Is not this to know me*, (ſaith the Lord) *Jer.* xxii. 15, 16. You think you know God, when you can diſcourſe well of Religion, and entertain Conferences of practical Caſes: You think it is Knowledge to underſtand Preachings and Scripture: But thus ſaith the Lord, *To do juſtly to all Men, to walk humbly towards God, to walk ſoberly in yourſelves*, is more real Knowledge of God, than all the Volumes of Doctors contain, or the Heads of Profeſſors. Is this Knowledge of God to have a long flouriſhing Diſcourſe containing much Religion in it? Alas no; to do juſtly, to oppreſs none, to pray more in ſecret, to walk humbly and ſoberly, this is to know the Lord. Practice is real Knowledge indeed, it argues, that what a Man knows, he receives in Love, that the Truth hath a deep Impreſſion on the Heart, that the Light ſhines into the Heart, to inflame it. What is Knowledge before God? As much as principles Affection and Action, as much as hath Influence on your Converſations: If you do not, and love not what you know, is that to know the Lord? Shall not your Knowledge be a Teſtimony againſt your Practice, and no more?

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SERMON X.

Isa. i. 16. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes; cease to do Evil,* &c.

IF we would have a Sum of pure and undefiled Religion, here it is set down in Opposition to this People's Shadow of Religion, that consisted in external Ordinances and Rites. We think that God should be as well pleased with our Service as we ourselves, therefore we chuse his Commands which our Humour hath no particular Antipathy against, and refuse others. But the Lord will not be so served: As he will not share with the World, and divide the Soul and Service of Man with Creatures, so as *Mammon* should get Part, and he his Part. No, if we chuse the one, we must refuse the other; for so will he not suffer his Word and Commands to be divided; there must be some Universality in respect of the Gospel and the Law, and a Conjunction of these two, or we cannot please him.

If Religion do not include the Gospel, we are yet upon the old Covenant of Works, according to which, none can be justified. If it do not include the Law in the Hands of a Mediator, then *we turn the Grace of God unto Wantonness.* If it shut out Jesus Christ and have no Use of him, how can either we or our Performances stand or be accepted before his holy Eyes. If it exclude the Law that Christ came to establish, how can he be pleased with our Religion: Both of these offer an Indignity to the Son of God. The Sum then of Christian Religion is Believing and Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience; that is, the Root and Fountain, this is the Fruit and Stream; Justification of our Persons, and Sanctification of our Lives and Hearts. *This is pure Religion and undefiled.* And therefore *Isaiah* says, *Wash you, make you clean,* cleanse in the only true Fountain of Christ's Blood. It is not your Purifications of the Law, your many Washings with Water and Hyssop; *It is not the Blood of Bulls and Goats can purge your Consciences from dead Works:* They do but purify your Flesh, but cannot wash your Souls, worse defiled. This Blood of Jesus Christ is that clean Water that he must sprinkle on you, if you would be clean. If you take any other Water, any other Righteousness but his, and wash thyself therewith, suppose it be Snow Water that washeth cleanest, thy most exact Conversation; yet *he will plunge thee in the Mire, till thy own*

Cloaths abhor thee, Job ix. 30, 31. Now, when you have washed your Persons, *ye need not save to wash your Feet*, (says Christ) your daily Conversation, reform it in the Virtue of that Blood, for *we are not called to Uncleanness but unto Holiness*; and therefore, *Put away the Evil of your Doings*, &c. God hath put away the Guilt of your Doings by Justification, now put ye away the Evil of your Doings by Sanctification, &c. And if ye would know what Sanctification is, *Cease to do Evil*; do not return to the old Puddle to wallow in it. Ye that are cleansed by this Blood, O! think how unbeseeming it is to you, to defile yourselves again with these Things ye are cleansed from: But now, *learn to do well*. Ye are given up to Christ, ye must be his Disciples, and he will teach you: *Learn of me*, saith Christ, you need no other Law almost but his Example; he is a visible and speaking Law, yet *seek Judgment*; As ye ought to look on my Example, so especially ponder that Word and Rule of Practice and Behaviour that I have left behind me, and given out as the Law-giver of the redeemed. Have I redeemed you; and should not I be the redeemed and ransomed one's King? Is there any Society in the World wants a Law, Order, and Government? Neither must ye who are delivered from Bondage, enfranchised and made free indeed. Now, ye should of all Men most live by a Law. And when ye know that Rule, then apply it to your several Vocations and Callings: Let the Magistrate act according to it, and every Man according to it: Religion consists not in a general Notion, but condescends to our particular Practice, to reform it. You see then what we would press upon your Consciences. It is true Religion that we would have you persuaded unto. All Men have some Kind of Religion, even Heathens who worship Idols; but the true Religion respects the true and living God. Now, what is it to worship the true and living God? What is the Service of him that may be called Religion indeed? Should we be the Prescrivers of it? No certainly, he must carve solely in that, or else it cannot please him; therefore *to the Law and to the Testimony*: If ye speak not according to this, and worship not according to this Word of God, it is because there is no Light into you. Ye may have a Religion before Men pure and undefiled, but if it be not so before God and the Father, I pray you to what Purpose is it? I am sure it is all lost Labour, nay, it is Labour with Loss, instead of Gain. O that ye were persuaded to look and search the Scriptures: Think ye to have eternal Life out of them? and think ye to have eternal Life by them, who do not labour to know the Way of it set down there? Every one of you have a different Model of Religion, according to your Fancies and Breedings, according as your Lusts will suffer you. The Rule that the most Part walk by is the Course and Example of the World. Is not this Darkness, and gross Darkness? Others model their Duties according to their Ability; they will do all they can do with Ease, and without troubling themselves, and they think God may be well pleased with that. I pray you consider and hear the Word of the Lord, and Law of your God: Hath he set down here the Rule and perfect Pattern of true Religion, and will ye never so much own it, as to examine yours according to it? The Scriptures are the Touch-stone; if you would not have a counterfeit Religion

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on deceiving you in the End when ye have trusted to it, I pray you try it by the Word of God. Oh that this Principle were once sunk into your Hearts, I may not walk at random, if I please my self, and satisfy my own Will, if that be not also God's Will, I shall have neither Gain nor Comfort of it; his Will is manifested in his Word, I will search and find what God hath required of me; for if I be not certain of his Will, I may be doing all my Days, and sweating out my Life, and yet lose my Pains and Oil. I say this Word of the Lord that *Isaiah* calls to the People to hear, *Ver.* 10. will at Length judge you. Your Religion will be tried in the Day of Accounts according to it, not according to your Rules and Methods ye have prescribed unto yourselves. Now, if ye in the mean Time shall judge yourselves according to another Rule, and absolve yourselves, and in the End God shall judge you according to this Word, and condemn you, were ye not Fools in neglecting this Word.

The whole Will of God concerning your Duty may be summed up in two; *John* hath one of them, 1 *Jo.* iii. 23. *And this is his Commandment that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment*: And *Paul* hath another to the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thes.* iv. 3. *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification.* And these two make up this Text, so that it unites both Gospel and Law. The Commandment of the Law comes forth, and it is found that we have broken and are guilty, that we cannot answer for one of a Thousand: The Law entering makes Sin abound; our Inability, yea Impossibility of Obedience is more discovered: Well then, the Gospel proclaims the Lord Jesus Christ for the Saviour of Sinners, and commands us under Pain of Damnation to believe in him, to cast our Souls on him, as one able to save, as one who hath obeyed the Law for us: So that this Command of believing in Christ is answerable to all the Breaches of the Law, and tends to make them up in Christ. When he proclaimed the Law on Mount *Sinai* with Terror, that which ye hear expresst is not his first Commandment, which ye are in the first Instance to obey, for all these we have broken; but it hath a Gospel Command in its Bosom, it leads to Jesus Christ; and if ye could read the Mind of God in it, ye would resolve all these Commands which condemn you and curse you, into one Command of believing in the Son, that ye may be saved from that Condemnation: And if ye obey this Command, which is his last Command, and most peremptory, then are the Breaches of all the rest made up; the Intent of all the rest is fulfilled, tho' not in your Obedience, yet in Christ's; which is better than ours. Believing in Christ presents God with a perfect Righteousness, with an Obedience even to the Death of the Cross. When a Sinner hears the holy and spiritual Sense of the Law, and sees it in the Light of God's Holiness, O how vile must he appear to himself, and how must he abhor himself? What original Pollution, what actual Pollution, what a Fountain within, what Uncleanness in Streams without, will discover itself? Now, when the most Part of Men get any Sight of this, presently they fall a washing and cleansing themselves, or hiding their Filthiness. And what Water take they? their own Tears or Sorrows, their own Resolutions, their own Reformations. But alas, we are still more plunged in our own

Filthineſs, that is ſtill marked before him, becauſe all that is as foul as that we would have waſhen away. What Garment do Men take to hide themſelves ordinarily? Is it not their own Righteouſneſs? Is it not a Shirt of ſome Duty that is ſpread over Tranſgreſſions? Do not Men think their Sins hid, if they can mourn and pray for a Time? Their Conſciences are eaſed by Reflection upon this. But alas, thine Iniquity is ſtill marked; ſhall Filthineſs hide Filthineſs? *Thy Righteouſneſs is as a vile Garment, is as a menſtruous Cloth*, Iſa. lxiv. 6. as well as thine Unrighteouſneſs; how then ſhall it cover thy Nakedneſs? Seeing it is ſo then, what is the Lord's Mind concerning our Cleanſing? Seeing ſtretched out Hands, and many Prayers will not do it, what ſhall I do? The Lord hath ſhewed thee what thou ſhalt do, and that is, that thou do nothing in Relation to that End, that thou ſhouldſt undertake to waſh away the leaſt Spot by all thy Repentance; yet muſt thou waſh and make clean, and the Water is brought new unto you, even *the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt that cleanſeth from all Sin.* Waſh in this Blood, and ye ſhall be clean. And what is it to waſh in this Blood? It is to believe in Chriſt Jeſus, to lay hold on the all-ſufficient Virtue of it, to truſt our Souls to it, as a ſufficient Ranſom for all our Sins; to ſpread the Covering of Chriſt his Righteouſneſs over all our Righteouſneſs and Unrighteouſneſs, as having both alike Need to be hid from his holy Eyes. Jeſus Chriſt *came by Water and by Blood*, 1 John v. 6. by *Water* to ſanctify, and by *Blood* to juſtify; by the Power and cleanſing Virtue of the Holy Ghoſt to take away Sin in the Being of it, and by the Virtue of his Blood to take away Sin in the Guilt and Condemnation of it.

Now, I conceive he preſſes a twofold Exerciſe upon them in this Waſhing, and both have Relation to the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, to wit, *Repentance* and *Faith.* If they be not all one, yet they are one in this Point inſeparably conjoined. Repentance waters and ſaps the Roots of Believing, which otherwiſe would dry up; therefore, inſtead of outward Forms and Ceremonies of Religion, he preſſeth them to inward Sorrow and Contrition of Heart for Sin, that they might preſent an acceptable Sacrifice to God, *a contrite Heart.* This is more pleaſing than many ſpecious Duties of Men without, *Pſal.* l. 7. *&c.* But when I preſs upon you Repentance, do not conceive that we would have it preparatory to Faith, that ye ſhould ſit down and mourn for your Sins for a Time, till your Hearts be ſo far humbled, and then ye might come as prepared and fitted to Jeſus Chriſt. This is the Miſtake of many Chriſtians, which keeps them from ſolid ſettling. We find it ordinary, Souls making Scruples and Objections againſt coming to Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe of Want of ſuch Preparations, of Meaſures of Humiliation and Contrition, which they preſcribe to themſelves, or do behold in others: And ſo they ſit down and apply themſelves to ſuch a Work, applies their Conſciences to the Law and Curſe; and they find, inſtead of Softning, Hardneſs, inſtead of Contrition of Spirit, more Dulneſs and Security; at leaſt they cannot get Satisfaction to themſelves in that they ſeek, and thus they hang their Head over their impenitent Hearts, and lament, not ſo much that Repentance is not, as that they cannot find it in themſelves. Alas, there

there are many Diseases in this one Malady. If it were imboweled unto you, ye would not believe that such a Way were so contradictory to the Gospel. For *first*, Ye who are so, have this Principle in your Hearts, which is the Foundation of it. I cannot come to Christ so unclean, I must be a little washen ere I come, the most gross Uncleanness and Hardness of my Heart must be taken away, and so I shall be accepted: Alas, what Derogation is this to the blessed Saviour? What Absurdity is it? I am too unclean to come to the Fountain, I must must be a little purged before I come to this Fountain that cleanseth from all Sin. I pray you, why was the Fountain opened? Was it not for Sin and Uncleanness? And this thou says by Interpretation, if I were so and so humbled, then I might come, and be worthy to come; when the Want of such a Measure debars thee as unworthy, doth not the having of it in thy Estimation make thee worthy? And so ye come with a Present in your Hand to Jesus Christ, with a Price and Reward to him who gives freely. Again, thou denyest Christ to be the only Fountain of all Grace, and so it is most dishonourable to him. If thou would have Repentance before thou come to him, where shall thou have it? Will thou find it in thy Heart, which is desperately wicked? Will thou seek it of God, and not seek it in the Mediator Jesus Christ? God out of a Mediator will not hear thee. In a Word, there is both extreme Sin, and extreme Folly in this Way: Great Sin, because it contradicts the Tenor of the Gospel, it dishonours the Lord Jesus, the exalted Prince, as if he were not the Fountain of all Grace; it is contrary both to the Freedom of his Grace, and to the Fulness of it also. It is great Folly, for thou leaves *the living Fountain*, and goes seeking Water in a Wilderness; thou leaves the Garden where all Herbs grow, and wanders abroad to the wild Mountains; and because thou canst not find what thou seeks, thou sits down and weeps beside it. Repentance is in Christ, and no Repentance so pleasing to God as the Mournings and Relentings of a pardoned Sinner: But thou seeks it far from him, yea, refuseth him for want of that which thou may have by choosing him. Therefore we declare this unto you, that whatever ye be, whatever ye want, if ye think ye stand in Need of Jesus Christ, embrace him: If ye be exceeding vile in your own Eyes, and cannot get Repentance as ye would to cleanse yourselves, here is the Fountain opened, and ready to wash into. Yet this we must tell you, that no Sinner can believe but he that repents, not because Repentance is required as a Preparation to give a Man a Warrand and Right to believe; I know no Ground of Faith but our Necessity, and the Lord's Promise and Command unto us, but because no Soul can truly flie into Jesus Christ to escape Sin's Guilt, but he that desires to be delivered from Sin itself; and therefore the most Part of you fancy a Faith which you have not, because there is no Possibility that Men will come out of themselves, till they be pressed out by discovered Sin and Misery within: Your Woulds and Wishes after Christ and Salvation, that many of you have, are not the real Exercises of your Soul's flying unto him for Salvation. If ye did indeed turn into Jesus Christ, your Hearts would turn the Back upon Sin, and these Sins ye seek Remission of. Now, all the Desire that many Men have of Christ, is this, I would fain have

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his Salvation, if I might keep my Sin: I would gladly be delivered from the Guilt of Sin, if he would let me keep ſtill the Sin. But will Chriſt make any ſuch Bargain?

If this Blood only waſh from Sin, Oh, how many ly in their Sins, and wallow in their Filthineſs? *There is a Generation clean in their own Eyes, and yet are not waſhed from their Filthineſs*, Prov. xxx. 12. Oh that ye believed this! If ye be not now waſhed, Eternity ſhall find you unclean; and Wo to the Soul that enters Eternity with all the Pollution of its Sins: Can ſuch a Soul enter into the high and holy Place, the clean City? No certainly, it muſt be without among the Dogs and Swine, it muſt be kept in Darkneſs for ever. It is then of great Importance, that ye be waſhen from your Filthineſs. Now, I ask you, is it ſo or not? Are ye made clean and waſhen from the Guilt of your Sins? Every one of you almoſt will ſay ſo, and think ſo, and yet ſays the Scripture, *There is a Generation pure in their own Eyes, and yet are not waſhed*. Is there a Generation ſuch? Is there any ſuch? Oh then, think 'tis poſſible you may be miſtaken in the Opinion of your own Cleanneſs; do any conceive themſelves pardoned, and yet are not ſo? Think it is poſſible you may have deceived yourſelves, eſpecially ſince ye have never examined it: But are there ſo many ſo, a whole Generation, the moſt Part of Men; then, as you love your Souls, try; for it is certain that the moſt Part of you muſt be deceived. Is there a Generation in the viſible Church not waſhen, and yet every one thinks himſelf clean? then certainly the moſt Part are in a great Deluſion; will ye then once examine whether or not ye be deluded with them? It ſhall be your Peace to know it, while it may be amended. But how comes it to paſs, that ſo many hearing of the Goſpel, and lying near this Fountain, are not cleanſed? I think certainly, becauſe they will not have a through cleanſing, they get none at all: All Men would love Chriſt's Blood well to pardon Sin, but who will accept of the Water to ſanctify them from Sin? but Chriſt came with both. Shall this Blood be ſpent upon Numbers of you, who have no Reſpect to it, but would ſtill wallow in your Filthineſs? Would ye have God pardoning theſe Sins ye never throughly reſolve to quite? But how is it that ſo many Men are clean in their own Eyes, and yet not waſhed? I think indeed, the Reaſon of it is, they make a Kind of Waſhing, which they apprehend ſufficient, and yet know not the true Fountain. We find Men taking much Sope and Nitre, when convinced of Sin, or charged with it, and thereupon ſoon abſolving themſelves. If ye ask their Grounds, they will tell you, they repent and are ſorry for it; they purpoſe to make Amends, and they think Amendment a good Compenſation for the paſt Wrong; they will, it may be, vow to drink no more for a Year after they have been drunk; they will confeſs their Sin in publick, and all this they do without having any Thought of Jeſus Chriſt, or the End of his Coming, and can abſolve themſelves from ſuch Grounds, tho' in the mean Time Chriſt come not ſo much as in their Mind; and therefore are they not really waſhed: All thy Righteouſneſs is unclean before God, and thy Repentances defile thee; and yet becauſe of ſome ſuch Duties, thou deceiveſt thyſelf, and art clean in thine own Eyes: Theſe have ſome Beauty in thy

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Eyes, and thou puts them between thy Filthineſs and thy Eye, and ſo conceives that thou art clean. I think a Reaſon alſo, why many Men are clean in their own Eyes, and conceive that God hath pardoned their Sin, is becauſe they have forgotten it; it is not recent in their Memory, and makes no preſent Wound in their Conſcience; and therefore, they apprehend God ſuch as themſelves, they think he hath forgotten it alſo. But Oh! how terrible ſhall it be, when God brings to Remembrance, and ſets our Sins in Order before us: Ye think God cares not for your Sins, that he forgives them, becauſe he is ſilent at them, *Pſal.* l. 21. But the Lord ſhall one Day ſet them before thee, and thou ſhalt know they were ſtill marked before him.

Ye who have waſhen in this Blood, ye may rejoice, for it ſhall make you clean every Whit. Your iniquities that ſo defiled you, ſhall not be found. O! the precious Virtue of that Blood that can purge away a Soul's Spots; all the Art of Men and Angels could not reach this. This Redemption and Cleanſing was precious, and would have ceaſed for ever; but this Blood is the Ranſom, this Blood cleanſeth, and ſo perfectly, that it ſhall not appear, not only to Mens Eyes, but alſo God's piercing Eye. Sinners quite your own Righteouſneſs, why defile ye yourſelves more? When your Eyes are opened, ye will find it ſo, here is Waſhing, apply yourſelves to this Fountain; and if ye do indeed ſo, if ye expect Cleanſing from Jeſus Chriſt, I pray you return not to the Puddle. Ye are not waſhen from Sin, to ſin more, and defile yourſelf more: If ye think ye have Liberty to do ſo, ye have no Part in this Blood.

SERMON XI.

Iſa. i. 16. *Waſh ye, make you clean, put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes; ceaſe to do Evil,* &c.

THERE are two Evils in Sin, one is the Nature of it, another the Fruit and ſad Effect of it. In itſelf it is Filthineſs, and contrary to God's Holineſs, an abaſing of the immortal Soul, a Spot in the Face of the Lord of the Creatures, that hath far debaſed him under them all: Tho' it be ſo unnatural to us, yet it is now in our fallen Eſtate become as it were natural, ſo that Men agree with it, as if it were ſunk and drunk into the very Soul of Man. The other is the Guilt and Deſert of Puniſhment and Obligation to it. All Men hate this, but they cannot hold it off: They eat the Tree and Fruit of Death, they

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must eat Death also; they must have the Wages of Sin, who have wrought for it. Now, the Gospel hath found a Remedy for lost Man in Jesus Christ; he comes in the Gospel with a twofold Blessing, a twofold Virtue, a pardoning Virtue, and a sanctifying Virtue, *Water and Blood*, 1 John v. 6. He comes to forgive Sin, and to subdue Sin; to remove the Guilt of it, and then thyself of it. God's Appointment had inseparably joined them; and *Christ came not to dissolve the Law, but to establish it.* If he had taken away the Punishment, and left the Sin in its Being, he had weakened the Law and the Prophets. That Conjunction of Sin and Wrath, which is both by divine Appointment, and suitable also unto their own Natures, must stand, that divine Justice may be intire; and therefore, he that comes to redeem us from the Curse of the Law, hath also this Commission, to redeem from Sin and all Transgressions of the Law, *Rom.* xi. 26. and *Gal.* iii. 13. He that turns away the Wrath of God from Men, turns also Ungodliness from them which provoked his Wrath; and so he is a complete Redeemer, and a complete Redeemer he had not been otherwise. If he had removed Wrath only, and left us under the Bondage of Sin, it had not been half Redemption; *he that commits Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* But this is perfect Freedom and Liberty, to be made free from Sin, for it was Sin that subjected us to Wrath, and so was the first Tyrant and the greatest. The Gospel then comes with a joyful Sound unto you, but many of you mistake it, and apprehends it to be a Doctrine of Liberty and Peace, and that unto Sin; but if it were so, it were no joyful Sound. If there were proclaimed a Liberty to all Men to do as they list, no Punishment, no Wrath to be feared, I would think that Doctrine no glad News, it were but the perpetuating of the Bondage of a reasonable Soul. But this is glad News, a Delivery and Freedom proclaimed in the Gospel, but what? Not unto Sin, but from Sin, and this is to be free indeed. We owe more to Jesus Christ for this, than for Redemption from Wrath, because Sin is a greater Evil than Wrath; yea, Wrath were not so, if Sin were not. Therefore he exhorts to wash, and wash so, that they may make clean: Take Jesus Christ for Justification and Sanctification, imploy both the Water and the Blood that he hath come with. But, because all Men pretend a Willingness to have Christ their Saviour, and their Sins pardoned through his Blood, who, notwithstanding, hate to be reformed, and would seek no more of Christ; therefore, he branches out that Part of the Exhortation in several Particulars. All Men have a general Liking of Remission of Sins, but renouncing of it, is to many a hard Doctrine; they would be glad that God put their Evils out of his Sight, by passing them by, and forgetting them: But, they will not be at the Pains of putting away their Evils from his Sight; and therefore, the Gospel which comprehends these two united, is not really received by many, who pretend to be Followers of it. *This is his Command, that ye believe.* Some pretend to obey this, and yet have no Regard of that other Part of his Will, even their Sanctification; and therefore, their Faith is dead, it is a Fancy. If ye did indeed believe and receive Christ for Pardon of Sin, it were not possible, but your Souls would be engaged and constrained, to endeavour to walk in all Well-pleasing: But

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it is an evident Token of one that is not washed from his Sin, and believes not in Christ, if he conceive within his Heart, a greater Latitude and Liberty to walk after the Flesh, and be imboldened to continue in Sin, because of his Grace and Mercy; and yet such are the most Part of you. Upon what Ground do ye delay Repentance? Upon what Presumption do ye continue in your Sins, and put over the serious Study of Holiness, till a more fit Time? Is it not from an Apprehension of the Grace and Mercy of God, that ye think ye may return any Time and be accepted, and so ye may in the mean Time take as much Pleasure in Sin as ye can, seeing ye may get leave also for God's Mercy; I pray you consider, that you have never apprehended God's Mercy aright, ye are yet in your Sins, and certainly as yet, are not not washed from them.

Put away the Evil, &c.] When the Spirit convinces a Soul, he convinces a Man, not only of evil Doings, but of the Evil of his Doings; not only of Sin, but of the Sinfulness of Sin; and not only of those Actions which are in themselves sinful, but also of the Iniquity of holy Things. I think no Man will come to wash in Christ's Blood, till this be discovered. If he see much Wickedness, many Evil-doings, yet he will labour to wash away these by his own Tears and Repentance and Well-doing. As long as he hath any good Actions, as Prayers, Fasting and such like, he will cover his Evil-doings by them: He will spread the Skirts of such Righteousness over his Uncleanness; and when he hath hid it from his own Eyes, he apprehends that he had hid it from God's also: He will wash his bloody Hands with many Prayers, and thinks they may be clean enough: We see Blasphemers of God's Name, use to join a Prayer for Forgiveness with their Oath and Curse, and they never trouble themselves more: Oh what mocking of God is this? Now, as long as it is thus, there is no Employment for the Son of God's Blood, they can do their own Turn: Men will not come to Christ, because it is the best Way, if they see any else beside: None will come till he see it is the only Way: None can wash in Christ, except they wash all. If ye have any Thing that needs not Washing, his Blood is not for you; his Righteousness is not known, when ye establish all, or a Part of your own. I fear the most Part of you have no Imployment for Christ; ye have extreme Need of him, but ye know it not; for there are many Things which ye will not number among your Sins, your Prayers, your Hearing, Reading, Singing, publick and private Worship, giving Alms, &c. How many of you were never convinced of any Sin in these? Do ye not conceive God is well pleased with you for them? Your Conscience hath convinced you, it may be, of gross Sins, as Drunkenness, Filthiness, Swearing, &c. But ye are not convinced for your Well-doing; ye find not a Necessity of a Mediator for these: I think many of you never confessed any such Thing, except in a general Notion. Alas, how ignorant are Men of themselves? We are unclean, how can any Thing we do cleanse us? Are not we unclean, and do not our Hands touch our own Works? Shall not then our own Uncleanness defile our good Actions, more than they can cleanse us? *Hag.* ii. 13. The Ignorance of this, makes Men go about to build up their old ruined Righteousness, and still seek something in themselves,

to make up Wants in themſelves. Always, when the Light of God hath diſcovered you to yourſelves, ſo that ye can turn your Eye no where, but Uncleanneſs fills it; tho' your Converſation be blameleſs in the World, ſo as Men can challenge nothing, yet ye have found within and without, nothing but Matter of Mourning; I ſay, this is an Evidence that the Spirit hath ſhined and inlightned thy Darkneſs. Now, when thou haſt fled unto Jeſus Chriſt for a Covering to thy Righteouſneſs, as well as Unrighteouſneſs, it remains that thou now *put away the Evil of thy Doings*; put not away thy Doings, but the Evil of them. We challenge your Prayers, Services, and publick Duties, even as the Prophet did; we declare unto you, that God is as evil pleaſed with them, as your Drunkenneſs, Whoreing, Intemperance, &c. The moſt Part of you, are no more acceptable when ye come to the Church, than when ye go to the Tavern, your praying and curſing is almoſt all one. What ſhall we do then, ſay ye? Shall we pray no more, and hear no more? No, ſay I, put not away your Prayers and Ordinances, *but put away the Evil of them from before his Sight.* Rather multiply your Doings, but deſtroy the Evil and Iniquity of your Doings. And there is one Evil or two above all, that makes them hateful to him; ye truſt too much in them: Here is the Iniquity, *the Idol of Jealouſy ſet up*; ye make your Doings your Righteouſneſs, and in that Notion, they are Abomination. There is nothing makes your Worſhip of God ſo hateful, as this; ye think ſo much of it, and juſtifie yourſelf by it: And then God knows what it is, that ye ſo magnifie, and make the Ground of your Claim to Salvation; it is even an empty Ceremony, a Shadow without Subſtance; a Body without a Soul; you ſpeak and look and hear, you exerciſe ſome outward Senſes, but no inward Affections: And what ſhould that be to him, who is *a Spirit?*

They did not obſerve the Iniquity of their holy Things; and therefore are they marked by him, *they are in his Sight*: They did not ſee ſo many Faults in their Prayers and Services; they wondered why God did chide them ſo much; but God marks what we miſs, he remembers when we forget: We cover ourſelves with a Vail of external Duties, and think to hide all the Rottenneſs of our Hearts, but it will not be hid from him, before whom Hell hath no Covering. *All Hearts are open and naked before him.* Your ſecret Sins are in the Sight of his Countenance. Men hear you pray, ſee you preſent at Worſhip, they know no more, at leaſt they ſee no more: Nay, but the Formality of thy Worſhip, the Wanderings of thy Mind are in his Sight. And O! how excellent a Rule of Walking were this, to do all in his Sight and Preſence. Oh that ye were perſwaded in your Hearts of his all-ſeeing, all-ſearching Eye, and all-knowing Mind. Would ye not be more ſollicitous and anxious anent the Frame of your Hearts, than the Liberty of your Speech or external Geſture? Oh how would Men retire within themſelves, to faſhion their Spirits before this all-ſearching, and all-knowing Spirit. If ye do not obſerve the Evils of your Hearts and Ways, they are in his Sight, and this will ſpoil all Acceptance of the Good of them: If ye obſerve the Evils of your Well-doing, and bring theſe alſo to the Fountain to waſh them, and be about

about this earneſt Endeavour of perfecting Holineſs, of perfecting Well-doings in the Power and Fear of God; then certainly he will not ſet your Sins in the Light of his Countenance, the Good of your Way ſhall come before him, and the Evil of it Chriſt ſhall take away.

Ceaſe to do Evil, &c.] Theſe are the two Legs a Chriſtian walks on; if he want any of them, he is lame and cannot go equally, ceaſing from Evil, and doing Good: Nay, they are ſo united, that the one cannot ſubſiſt without the other. If a Man do not ceaſe from Evil and his former Luſts, he cannot do well, or perfect Holineſs. There are many different Diſpoſitions and Conditions of Men; there are generally one of two. Some have a Kind of Abſtinence from many groſs Sins, and are called civil honeſt Men, they can abide an Inqueſt and Cenſure of all their Neighbours, they can ſay no Ill of them; but alas, there is as little Good to be ſaid: He drinks not, ſwears not, whores not, ſteals not. Nay, but what doth he well? Alas, the World cannot tell what he doth, for he prays not in ſecret, nor in his Family, he is void of ſome Offences towards Men; but there are many Duties called to, towards both God and Men, he is a Stranger to. He oppreſſes not the Poor, nay, but he is not charitable either to give to them; he defrauds no Man, but whom helps he by his Means? Again, there are others, they will boaſt of ſome Things done; they pray, they keep the Church well, they do many good Turns, and yet for all that, they do not ceaſe to do Evil; they were Drunkards, ſo they are; they can ſwear for all their Prayers, are given to Contention, to Lying, to Filthineſs, &c. Now, I ſay, neither of theſe Religions is pure and undefiled. Religion is a through and intire Change; it is like a new Creation, that muſt deſtroy the firſt Subject, to get Place for that which is to come; it is a putting off old Garments, to put on new; the putting off an old Form and engraven Image, to make Place for a new Engraving. Men do not put a Seal above a Seal, but deface the old, and ſo put on the new; Men do not put new Cloaths upon the old, but put the old off, and ſo they have Place for the new: Religion muſt have a naked Man. Godlineſs is a new Suit, that will not go on upon ſo many Luſts; no, no, it is more meet and more comformed unto the Inwards of the Soul than ſo: The Cold muſt go out as the Heat comes in: Many Men do not change their Garments, but mends them, puts ſome new Pieces into them; they retain their old Luſts, their Heart Idols, and they will add unto theſe a Patch of ſome external Obedience; but alas, is this Godlineſs? Hypocriſy will be content of a Mixture, Sin is the Harlot, whoſe Heart could endure to ſee the Child parted. It can give God a Part, to get leave to brook the moſt Part; Sin will give God Liberty to take ſome of the outward Man, if it keep the Heart and Soul: But God will not reckon on theſe Terms, he will have all the Man or nothing, for he is the righteous Owner. True Godlineſs cannot mix ſo, but falſe and counterfeit may do it well. Other Men again, poſſibly uncloath themſelves of ſome Practices, but they put on new Cloathing; they reform ſome Paſſages for fear of Cenſure, or Shame, or ſuch like; they are found, it may be, blameleſs, either becauſe ſo educated, or their Diſpoſition is againſt particular groſs

Sins: But they are not cloathed upon with Holineſs and Well-doing, and ſo they are but naked and bare in God's Sight, not beautiful: They have ſweept their Houſe, and ſome Devil put out or kept out; but becauſe the good Spirit enters not, ordinarily ſeven worſe enter again into ſuch Men.

There is a great Moment of Perſwaſion in this Order of the Exhortation, *Waſh you*, and then, *put away the Evil of your Doings, and ceaſe to do Evil.* Do not continue in your former Cuſtoms. It is ſtrange, how contrary our Hearts are to God; we uſe to turn Grace unto Wantonneſs; we uſe to take more Liberty to ſin, when we conceive we are pardoned: But I do not know any more ſtrong and conſtraining Perſwaſion to forſake Sin, than the Conſideration of the forgiving of it might yield. Oh what an Inducement and grand Argument, to renouncing of Evils, is the Conſideration of the Remiſſion of them. This is even that ye are now called unto, who have fled to Jeſus to eſcape Wrath: What ſhould ye be taken up with, in all the World but this, to live to him henceforth, who died for us? To forſake our own old Way, and that from the conſtraining Principle of Love to him, 2 *Cor.* v. 14, 15. Oh, that ye would enforce your own Hearts with ſuch a Thought, when there are any Solicitations to Sin, to former Luſts. Should I that am dead to Sin, live any longer therein? *Rom.* vi. Should I who am waſhed from ſuch Pollutions, return again to the Pollutions of the World? Should I again defile myſelf, who am cleanſed by ſo precious Blood, and forget him that waſhed me? *Should I return with the Dog to the Vomit, and with the Sow to the Puddle?* God forbid. I pray you conſider, if you be Chriſtians indeed, give a Proof of it. What hath Jeſus Chriſt done for you? He hath given himſelf, his own precious Blood a Ranſom for us, will ye not give up yourſelves to him? Will not ye give him your Sins and Luſts, which are not yourſelf, but Enemies to yourſelf? Will not ye put away theſe Ills, that he came in this World to deſtroy? Art thou a Chriſtian, and are there yet ſo many Sins, and Works of the Devil reigning in thee, and ſet up in God's Sight? What an Inconſiſtency is this? If thou be his Follower, thou muſt put theſe away. Give them a Bill of Divorcement, never to turn again. Many a Man parts with his Sin, becauſe it leaves him, he puts it not away; Temptation goes, and Occaſion goes away, but the Root of it abides within him. Many Men have particular Jarrs with their Corruptions, but they reconcile again, as Differences between married Perſons; they do not ariſe to hate their Sin in its ſinful Nature: But if thou hate it, then put it away. And who would not hate it, that Chriſt ſo hated, that he came to deſtroy it? 1 *John* iii. 5. What a great Indignity muſt it be to the Goſpel, to make that the Ground of living in Sin, which is preſſed in it, as the grand Perſwaſion to forſake it? Seeing we are waſhed from the Guilt of it, Oh let us not love to keep the Stain and Filth of it. Why are we waſhen? Was it not Chriſt's great Intendment and Purpoſe, to purify to himſelf a holy People? We are waſhen from the Guilt of our Sins, and is it to defile again? Is it not rather *to keep ourſelves henceforth clean, that we may be preſented holy and unblameable in his Sight?* That we may ſeek to be as like Heaven as may be. But who ceaſes

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to do these Evils, that he says are pardoned? Who puts away the Evils of these Doings, the Guilt whereof, he thinks God hath put away? Could ye find in your Hearts to intertain those Evils so familiarly, to pour out your Souls unto them, if that Peace of God were indeed spoken unto you? Would not the Reflex of his Love prove more constraining on your Hearts? Were it possible, that if ye did indeed consider, that your Lusts cost Christ a dear Price to shed his Blood, that your Pleasures made his Soul heavy to Death, and that he hath laid down his Life to ransom you from Hell; were it possible, I say, that ye would live still in these Lusts, and choose these Pleasures of Sin, which were so bitter to our Lord Jesus? I beseech you be not deceived, if ye love the Puddle still, that ye cannot live out of it, do not say that ye are washed. Ye may have washen yourselves with Sope and Nitre, but the Blood of Christ hath not cleansed: For, if that Blood sprinkled your Conscience once, to give you an Answer to all Challenges, it could not but send forth Streams to purify the Heart, and so the whole Man. The Blood and Water might be joined, the justifying Saviour, and the sanctifying Spirit; for both these are in this Gospel Washing, 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. 1 *John* v. 6. *This is he that came by Water and Blood, even Jesus Christ, not by Water only, but by Water and Blood.* Not by Water only, but by Blood also, and I say, not by Blood only, but by Water also. The very Purpose of Forgiveness, is not to lay a Foundation for more Sin, but that Men may sin no more, but break off their Sins. It is indeed impossible for a Man to amend his Ways, till he be pardoned, for his Sin stands betwixt him and God; God is a consuming Fire, the Guilt of it hinders all meeting of the Soul with God, at least, all Influence from him: But when an open Door is made in Christ, that Men may come and treat with God, notwithstanding of Rebellions, and have the Curse relaxed: O how may he go about his Duty comfortably. Am I escaped from Hell, why should I any more walk in the Way to it? And now he hath the Spirit given for the asking. There are some Cessations from Sin, that are not real Forsakings of it, and Ceasings from it: You know Men will abstain from eating for a Season, that they may be made ripe for it another Time: Some do not cease from Sin, but delays it only; they put it not away, but put it off only for another Time, till a fitter Occasion and Opportunity. And this is so far from ceasing from it, that it is rather a deliberate Choice of it, and Election of Conveniency for it: There may be some pure and simple Ceasings from Sin, mere Abstinence, or rather mere Absence of Sin for a Season, that is not ceasing from doing Evil. The Christian's Ceasing hath much Action in it: It is such a ceasing from doing Evil, that it is a putting away of Evil; it hath the Soul and Spirit joined in that Cessation. Sin requires Violence to put it out where it hath haunted, it is an intruding Guest, and an usurping Guest: It comes in first as a Supplicant and Beggar, prays for a little Lodging for a Night, and promises to be gone; the Temptation speaks but for a little Time, even the present Time, for a little one, it seeks but little at first, least it be denied; but if once it be received into the Soul, it presently becomes Master, and can command its own Time, and its Abode: Then ye will not so easily put it out,

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as ye could hold it out, for it is now joined with that wicked, desperate Party within you, *the Heart*, and these united Fores are too strong for you. According as a Lust is one with a Man's Heart, or hath nearer Connection with his Heart and Soul, it is the worse to put away: For, will ye drive a Man from himself, it is the cutting off a right Hand, or plucking out of a right Eye. To make a Man cease from such Evils, it requires that a stronger Power be within him, than is in the World. Men may cease for a Time, for Want of Occasions or Temptations to sin; when there is no active Principle in them, restraining or keeping their Soul from such Sins as appears after, when no sooner Occasion is offered, but they run as the Horse to his Course, or the Stone falleth downward, they conceive Fire as easily as dry Stubble: That is not Christian ceasing, which is that which the Soul argues itself to, from Grounds of the Gospel. Should I who am dead to Sin, live any longer therein? This is a Principle of Cessation, and this is true Liberty, when the Soul can abstain from present Temptations, upon such Grounds and Perswasions of the Gospel; then it is really above itself, and above the World, then hath it that true Victory. Many Men cease only from Sin, because Sin ceases from them, they have not left it, but it hath left them. The old Man thinks himself a changed Man, because he wallows not in the Lusts of the Flesh, as in his Youth. But alas, no Thanks to him for that, he hath not ceased from his Lusts: But Temptations to him, or Power and Ability in him to follow them hath ceased, there is no Change in his Spirit within, for he can talk of his former Sins with Pleasure, he continues in other Evils as bad, but more suitable to his Age. In a Word, he is so inwardly, that if he were in his Body, and Occasions offering as before, he would be just the same. Some, again, cease from some Evils, from some Principles, but alas, they are no Christian Principles. What restrains the Multitude of Civilians from gross Scandals? Is it any Thing but Affectation of a good Name and Report in the World? Is it not Fear of Reproach or Censure? Is it not because possibly they have no particular Inclination to such Evils? And yet there are many other Evils of the Heart as Evil, tho' more subtile, that they please themselves in, as Pride, Covetousness, Malice, Envy, Ambition, &c. What shall all your Abstinence be accounted of, when it is not Love to Jesus Christ, or Hatred of Sin that principles it? It is not the outward Abstinence that will commend you: Such it is, as the Principles of it are. And these only are the true Christian Principles of Mortification, Love of Jesus Christ, *which constrains Men to live no more to themselves*, but to be new Creatures, 1 *Cor.* v. 14, 15. and Hatred of Sin in its Nature as Sin: A Christian should have a mortal Hatred at it, as his mortal Enemy. It is not Christianity to abstain from some fleshly Lusts, if ye consider them not as your Soul's Enemies, 1 *Pet.* ii. 11. *Ye that love the Lord, hate Evil*, Psal. xcvii. 10. These are chained together. *David*'s Hatred was a Soul Hatred, an Abhorency, *Psal.* cxix. 163. *I hate and abhor lying*; it is like the natural Antipathies, that are among Creatures: The Soul hates not only the Person of it, but the Nature of it also. Men often hate Sin, only as it is circumstantiate; but Christian Hatred is a Hatred

red of the Nature, like the deadly Feuds, which are Enmities againſt the Kind and Name. *I will put Enmity between thy Seed*, &c. *It is a perfect Hatred*, Pſal. cxxxix. 22. And ſo it cannot endure any Sin, becauſe all is contrary to God's Holineſs, and offenſive to his Spirit. I would think it eaſier to forſake all Evil, and ceaſe from doing any Evil, I mean preſumptuouſly, with a willing Mind and Endeavour, than indeed to forſake one; for as long as ye entertain ſo many Luſts like it, they ſhall make Way for it. It were eaſier to keep the whole Commandments in an evangelical Senſe, than indeed to keep any one, for all of them help another, and ſubſiſt they cannot one without another, ſo that ye take a fooliſh Courſe, who go about particular Reformations. Ye ſcandalous Sinners profeſs that ye will amend the particular Fault ye are guilty of, and in the mean Time, ye take no heed to your Souls and Lives; therefore it ſhall be either in vain, or not acceptable: How pleaſant a Life would Chriſtians have, if they would indeed be perſwaded to be altogether Chriſtians; the halfing of it neither pleaſeth God nor delights you; it keeps you but in continual Torment between God and *Baal*; Your own Luſts uſurp over you, and that of Chriſt in you challenges the Supremacy; ſo ye are as Men under two Maſters, each ſtriving for the Place, and were it not better to be under one ſettled Government? If there be any Tenderneſs of God in your Hearts, or Light in your Conſciences, they cannot but teſtify againſt your Luſts, theſe ſtrange Lords; your Luſts again, they drive you on againſt your Conſcience; thus ye are divided and tormented betwixt two, your own Conſcience and Affections. You have thus the Pain of Religion, and know not the true Pleaſure of it: You are marred in the Pleaſures of Sin, Conſcience and the Love of God is a Worm to eat that Gourd, it is Gall and Vinegar mixed in with them. Were it not more Wiſdom, to be either one Thing or another. If ye will have the Pleaſures of Sin for a Seaſon, take them wholly, and renounce God, and ſee if your Heart can endure that. If your Heart cannot condeſcend to that, I pray you renounce them wholly, and ye ſhall find more exquiſite and ſure Pleaſures in Godlineſs, at his Right-hand. O what a noble Entertainment hath the Soul in God; the Peace and Joy of the Holy Ghoſt is a Kingdom indeed.

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SERMON XII.

Isa. xxvi. 3. *Thou shalt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.*

ALL Men love to have Privileges above others. Every one is upon the Design and Search after some Well-being, since *Adam* lost that which was true Happiness: We all agree upon the general Notion of it, but presently Men divide in the following of Particulars. Here all Men united in seeking after some Good, something to satisfy their Souls, and satiate their Desires. Nay, but they scatter presently in the Prosecution of it, because, according to every Man's Fancy and corrupt Humour, they attribute that Good unto diverse Things; and when they meet with Disappointment, they change their Opinion of that, but are made no wiser, for they turn from one to another of that same Kind, in which their Imagination hath supposed Blessedness to be; and therefore, they will return to that which they first loathed and rejected. Is there then no such Thing in the World as Blessedness? Is it not to be found among Men? Are all Men's unsatiable Desires in vain? Is a Creature made up and composed of Desires, to keep it in continual Torment and Vexation of Spirit? No certainly, it is, and it is found by some; all the World strive about it, but the Man only who trusts and believes in God, he it is who carries it away from them, who hath this Privilege beyond the World. And why do so many miss it? Because they do not see nor suspect that it is Blessedness indeed which he enjoys: But on the contrary, their corrupted Imaginations represent Godliness, and a godly Man's Self-indigency and Dependence on God, as the greatest Misery and Shame. The godly Man hides not his Blessedness from the World; no, he proclaims it when he hath found it; he would that all enjoyed it with him. And if there were no more to declare, that it doth not consist in worldly Things, this might suffice; they are not communicable to many, without the Prejudice and Loss of every one. But none will believe his Report of his own Estate.

If ye would consider, here is that which Men toil for, compass Sea and Land for, here it is, *near thee in thy Mouth*: It is not in Heaven, that thou should say, *How shall I ascend to it?* It is not in Hell below, that thou shouldest say, *Who shall descend?* Is it not in the Ends of the Earth; no, *it is near thee, in thy Mouth*: It is not beyond the Sea, *but it is near in thy Mouth,*

Mouth, even the Word of Faith, which Christ preached, *Rom.* x. 6, 7, 8. And what says that Word? *Believe with thy Heart, and thou shalt be saved; trust in God, and depend on him, and ye shall have Peace*, and that perfect Peace; and this Peace shall be kept by God himself. *Blessed then is the Man that trusts in the Lord*, Psal. xl. 4. Ye make a long Journey in vain, ye spend your Labour and Money in vain, all the Pains might be saved, it is not where ye seek it; ye travel about many Creatures, ye go to many Doors, and enquire for Happiness and Peace, but ye go too far off, ye need not search so many Coasts, it is nearer Hand, in this Word of the Gospel, the joyful Sound; it is this that proclaims Peace. Peace is a comprehensive Word, especially in Scripture. It was the *Jews* Salutation, *Peace be to you*, meaning Happiness and all good Things: It is Christ's Salutation, Grace and Peace. Grace is Holiness, Peace is Happiness, and these are either one, or inseparably conjoined as one. This was the Angel's Song, *Glory to God, Peace on Earth*; Luke ii. 14. Blessedness was restored, or brought near to be restored, to miserable Man by Jesus Christ, and upon the Apprehension of this, Angels sing. It was this Christ came into the World with, and when he went away, he left this Legacy to his Children, *My Peace I leave you*, John xiv. 27. We lost Happiness, and all Men are on a vain Pursuit of it since, but it is found, and found by one of our Kin; our Lord Jesus, our elder Brother, he hath found it, or made it, and brought it near us in the Gospel, for the receiving; and whoso receives him by Faith, and trusting in him, receives that Privilege, that Peace. He endured much Trouble to gain our Peace, he behoved to undergo Misery, to purchase our Blessedness, and so it is his own, and whoso receives him, receives it also.

The News of such a Peace might be seasonable in the Time of War and Trouble, if we apprehended our Need of it. It is not a Peace from War and Trouble, but a Peace in War and Trouble. *My Peace I leave you, in the World ye shall have Trouble*, John xiv. 27. and xvi. at the End. What a blessed Message is it, that there is a Peace, and a perfect Peace attainable in the Midst of Wars, Confusions and Calamities of the Times, publick and personal, a perfect Peace, a complete Peace, even complete without the Accession of outward and worldly Peace, that needs it not; nay, appears most perfect and intire in itself, when it is striped naked of them all. Behold what a Privilege the Gospel offers unto you; ye need not be made miserable, but if you please. This is more than all the World can afford you, there is no Man can promise to himself Immunity from publick Dangers, or personal, from many Griefs and Disappointments: But the Gospel bids you reckon up all your Troubles and Miseries that ye can meet with in the World; and yet in such a Case, if ye hearken to Wisdom, there is a Peace that will make you forget that Trouble; *Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace*, Pro. iii. 17. I will undertake to make thee blessed, says *Wisdom, the Father's Wisdom*. When all the World hath given thee over for miserable, when thou hast spent thy Substance on the Physicians, and in vain, come to me, I can heal that desperate Disease by a Word. *I create Peace*, when natural Causes have given it over,

I create it of nothing, *I will keep you in perfect Peace.*

You have then here, three Things of ſpecial Concernment, in theſe Times and all Times, a Bleſſedneſs, a perfect Peace attainable, the Way of it, and the Fountain of it: The Fountain of it, the Preſerver of it, is *God himſelf*; the Way to attain it, is *truſting in God*, and *ſtaying on him.* This Sweetneſs of Peace, is in God the Tree of Life, Faith puts to its Hand, and plucks the Fruit of the Tree; Hope and Dependence on God, is a Kind of taſting of that Fruit and eating of it; and then followeth this perfect Peace, as the delightful Reliſh and Sweetneſs that the Soul finds in God, upon taſting how gracious he is. God himſelf is *The Life of our Souls, the Fountain of living Waters, the Life and Light of Men.* Faith and truſting in God, draws out of this Fountain, out of this deep Well of Salvation, and ſtaying on God drinks of it, till the Soul be refreſhed with Peace and Tranquility, ſuch as paſſeth natural Underſtanding. Chriſt Jeſus is the Tree of Life, that grows in the Garden of God, truſting in him by Faith implants a Soul in him, roots a Soul in him; by Virtue of which Union, it ſprings up and grows into a living Branch, by ſtaying and depending upon him, we live by him, and hence ſprings this bleſſed and ſweet Fruit of Peace of Soul and Conſcience, which grows upon the Confidence of the Soul placed in God, as the Stalk by which it is united to the Tree. Truſting and ſtaying upon God, is the Soul's caſting its Anchor upon him, in the Midſt of the Waves and Storms of Sin, Wrath and Trouble. The poor beaten Sinner caſts an Anchor within the Vail, on that ſure Ground of immutable Promiſes in Jeſus Chriſt; and then it reſts and quiets itſelf at that Anchor, enjoys Peace in the Midſt of the Storm, there is a great Calm, it is not moved, or not greatly moved, as if it were a fair Day. *David* flieth unto God as his Refuge, anchors upon the Name of the Lord, *Pſal.* lxii. 1, 2. And ſo he enjoys a perfect Calm and Tranquility, *I ſhall not be moved*, becauſe he is united to the Rock, he is tied to the firm Foundation Jeſus Chriſt, and no Storm can diſſolve this Union; not becauſe of the Strength of that Rope of Faith, it is but a weak Cord, if Omnipotency did not compaſs it about alſo; and ſo *we are kept by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation.* The poor wearied Traveller, the Pilgrims ſits down under the Shadow of a Rock, and this Peace is his Reſt under it. Faith lays him down, and Peace is his Reſt and Sleep. Faith in Jeſus Chriſt is a Motion towards him, as the Soul's proper Place and Centre; and therefore it is called a coming to him, flying to him as the City of Refuge: It is the Soul's Flight out of itſelf, and Miſery and Sin within, to apprehend Mercy and Grace, and Happineſs in Chriſt. Now, Hope is the Conjunction or Union of the Soul with him, the Soul then ſtaying and reſting on him, as in its proper Place, and ſo it enjoys perfect Peace and Reſt in its Place; ſo that if ye remove it thence, than ye offer Violence to it.

Theſe two Things are of greateſt Importance to you to know; what this perfect Peace is, and what is the Way to attain it? The one is the Privilege and Dignity, the other is the Duty of a Chriſtian, and theſe two make him up what he is.

I would think that Man perfectly bleſ-

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sed, who is at Peace with two Things, God and himself. If a Man be at Peace with Creatures without him, and be at Peace with himself, but have War within his own Mind, that Man's Peace is no Peace, let be perfect Peace. *A Man's greatest Enemy is within his own House.* And within indeed, when it is in his Bosom and Soul: When a Man's Conscience is against him, it is worse than a World beside. *Conscientia mille testes*, so I say, it is *mille hostes*. It is a thousand Witnesses, and a thousand Enemies. It were better to endure Condemnation of any Judge, of many Judges in the World, than to sustain the Conviction of a Man's own Conscience: *When it accuseth, who shall excuse?* John viii. 9. Rom. ii. 15. *A merry Spirit* (saith *Solomon*) *is a continual Feast*, Prov. xv. 15. And what must a Heart be, which hath such a gnawing Worm within it, as an accusing Conscience, to eat it out? This is the Worm of Hell that dies not out, which makes Hell, Hell indeed. This indeed will be a painful Consumption, *A broken Spirit dryeth up the Bones*, it will eat up the Marrow of the Spirit and Body, *Prov.* xvii. 22. What infirmity is there which a Man cannot bear? Poverty, Famine, War, Pestilence, Sickness, name what you will; but a wounded Spirit who can bear? *Prov.* xviii. 14. And there is Reason for it, for there is none to bear it: A sound and whole Spirit can sustain Infirmities, but when that is wounded, which should bear all the rest, What is behind to bear it? It is a Burden to itself: If a Man have Trouble and War in this World, yet there is often escaping from it; a Man may fly from his Enemy, but when thy Enemy is within thee, whether shalt thou fly? Thou cannot go from thyself, thou carries about thee thy Enemy, thy Tormenter.

But suppose a Man were at Peace within himself, and cried Peace, Peace to himself; yet if he be not at Peace with God, shall his Peace be called Peace? Shall it not rather be named supine Security? If a Man be at Variance with himself, and his Soul disquieted within, there is more Fear than Danger, if he be at Peace with God. It is but a false Alarm that shall end well: But if he have Peace in his own Bosom, and yet no Agreement with God; then Destructions are certainly coming, his Dream of Peace will have a terrible wakening. A Man may sleep soundly, and his Enemies round about him, because he knoweth not of it; but he is in a worse Estate, nor he that is in great Fear, and his Enemies either none, or far distant: The one hath present Danger, and no Fear, the other present Fear, and no Danger, and which of these think ye best? Sudden Destruction awakes the one from Sleep, *Ezek.* vii. 25. Their Fear and Destruction come both at once, when it is now in vain to fear, because it is past Hope, *Prov.* i. 27. Therefore the Lord swears, that *there is no Peace to the Wicked*, Isa. xlviii. 22. What? Do not they often cry Peace to themselves, and put the evil Day far off? No Men are so without Bands in Life and Death as they, they have made Agreement with Hell and Death, and their own Consciences; yet for all that, *Thus saith the Lord, there is no Peace to the Wicked.* If God be against us, what is the Matter who be with us; for he can make a Man's Friends his Enemies, and he can make a Man's Enemies to be at Peace with him: *He makes Peace and creates Trouble*, Isa. xlv. 7. Men can but

deſtroy the Body, but he can deſtroy both Body and Soul for ever. O what a potent and everlaſting Enemy is he? There is no eſcaping from his all-ſeeing Eye, and powerful Hand, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 7, 8. A Man may fly from Men, but whether ſhall he fly from his Preſence? To Heaven? He is there: To Hell? He is there. The Darkneſs of the Night hath been a Covering under which many have eſcaped, and been ſaved in Armies, but Darkneſs is no Covering to him, it is all one with Light: He is near hand every one of us; the Conſcience is within us, but he is within the Conſcience; and how much God is above the Creature, ſo great and dreadful a Party is he above any Enemy imaginable. Therefore I conclude, that that Man only hath perfect Peace, who is at Peace with God, and with his own Conſcience. If a Man be at Peace with God, and not with himſelf, he wants but a Moment's Time of perfect Peace; for, ere it be long, the God of it will ſpeak Peace unto him. But if he be at Peace with God and himſelf, I know not what he wants of the perfect Peace, of the *Peace Peace:* For it is a Man's Mind that makes Peace or War, it is not outward Things; but in the midſt of Peace, he may be in Trouble, and in the midſt of Trouble in Peace, according as he hath Satisfaction and Contentment in his own Breaſt: For what is all the Grace of a Chriſtian? It is Godlineſs with Contentment: It is not Godlineſs and Riches, Godlineſs and Honour, or Pleaſure, Godlineſs and outward Peace. No, no, Contentment compenſeth all theſe, and hath in it eminently, all the Gain and Advantage of theſe. A Man in Honour, a rich Man, having no Contentment in it, is really as poor, as ignominious, as the poor and deſpiſed Man. If Contentment then be without theſe Things, certainly they cannot be miſſed; for where Contentment is not with them, it only is miſſed, and they not conſidered. Contentment is all the Gain that Men ſeek in Riches and Honour and Pleaſure; if a godly Man have that ſame without them, he then hath all the Gain and Advantage, and wants nothing, but ſome Trouble that ordinarily attends them: Outward Peace cannot add to inward Peace, and ſo the Want of it cannot diminiſh.

We muſt begin at the Original, if we would know rightly this Peace that paſſeth Knowledge. The Fountain-head is Peace with God; a Stream of this is Peace of Conſcience, and Peace with the Creatures. There is a Peace of Friendſhip, when Perſons were never Enemies, and there is a Peace of Reconciliation, when Parties at Variance are made one. Innocent *Adam* had Peace once with God as a Friend, Angels continue ſo to this Day; but now there is no ſuch Peace between Men and God, for *all are become Enemies to God, and Aliens from the common Wealth of Iſrael*; That Peace was broken by Rebellion againſt God his Maker, and all the Poſterity are born with the ſame Enmity againſt God. On our Part *are Hearts deſperately wicked, whoſe Imagination is only Evil continually.* On God's Part *is holy and ſpotleſs Juſtice, that is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity,* and therefore muſt deſtroy it or the Sinner. On our Part, are ſo many Rebellions, *Adam*'s actual Tranſgreſſion, and all our own Sins and Breaches of the holy Law, as ſo many Breaches of Peace. On God's Part, are ſo many Curſes anſwerable to the Breaches of the

the Law: *Cursed is every one that abideth not in every Thing*, &c. This Curse is even the Proclamation of Men to be Traitors, and an Intimation of the righteous Judgment which will come upon them. *Adam* was in a Covenant of Peace with God, *Do, and thou shalt live, if not, thou shalt die. Adam* brake this Covenant, so the Peace is dissolved, and God is no more obliged to give Life, but to execute the Pain contained in the Covenant: And in Sign and Token of this, look how *Adam* fled from God's Presence, to hide himself when he heard his Voice, it was a poor Shift, *for whether should he go from his Presence?* But alas, seeking more Wisdom, he lost that he had, seeking divine Wisdom, he lost human. Now, there is no more making up this Peace on such Terms again; we have no Capacity to treat with God any more: But blessed be his Majesty, who hath found out the Way of Agreement and Reconciliation. Oh that ye were once perswaded of your Enmity against God; ye are not born Friends, tho' ye be born within the visible Church. How dreadful a Thing is it, to have the most high and terrible God against you, to do to you acccording to your Deservings! Ye all know this, we are Enemies to God by Nature; I pray you, is it but a Name? Is it not worthy deep Consideration? But who considereth this Matter? If ye lose a Friend, ye will be troubled, and the more behoveful your Friend was, the more troubled you will be. If a great and potent Nation proclaimed War against us, we cannot but be sensible of it: But alas, who considereth the great Breach that is between God and all Men, occasioned by the first Man's Transgression and Rebellion. It is one of the Degrees of Health, to know the Disease, and I may call it a Degree of Peace, a Kind of Preparation to Peace, to know the Enmity, and not generally to know it, but to ponder it till the Heart be affected with it; to call a Counsel of all the Faculties and Affections of the Soul, to consider the great imminent Danger of Man's Common-wealth. What is it, I pray you, that is the greatest Obstruction of Mens making Peace with God, that makes the Breach irreparable, and the Wound incurable? It is this, certainly; no Man apprehendeth it aright: We entertain good Thoughts of our Friendship with God, or that it is easy to be reconciled. Who seeth such a wide Breach between God and Man, that all the Merits of Angels and Men could not make it up? Who seeth the Price of Redemption so precious, as it must cease for ever, for all that Men and Angels can do? Is not every Man offering God Satisfaction, either his Tears, or Sorrow, or Amendment in Time coming, or all of them? Do not Men undertake to pacify God with external Ordinances, and think it may suffice for their Sins? Certainly ye are ignorant of the infinite Separation between God and Man, that imagines a Treaty with him yourself, or that ever ye can come in speaking Terms: And therefore is this War and Enmity perpetual; therefore there is no Peace, when ye cry Peace, Peace. When ye have Peace within you, and say that ye have Peace with God; yet certainly, *The Lord thy God is against thee, and will not spare thee*, Deut. xxix. 19. Many of you bless yourselves in your own Hearts; when ye hear the Curse and Threatning of the Law, ye say, God forbid, or all that were true. Well, thus saith the Lord, all these Curses that are writ-

written in this Book ſhall ly upon thee, and the Lord ſhall ſeparate thee unto Evil, becauſe ye take not with your Enmity; there can be no Treaty, a Mediator can have no Imployment from you.

How ſhall the Breach of Peace be made up? Since the firſt Covenant cannot be made up again, where ſhall the Remedy be found? God is juſt and righteous, Men are rebellious and ſinful; can theſe meet, and the one not be conſumed? Will not God be a conſuming Fire, and Men as Stubble before the Lord's Preſence? Therefore, there muſt be a Mediator between them, a Peace-maker, to make of two, one, to take up the Difference. And this Mediator muſt be like both, and yet neither wholly the one, nor the other. He muſt therefore be God and Man, that he may be a fit Day's Man, betwixt God and Man: And this is our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. In his Divinity he comes near to God, in his Humanity he comes near to Man: In his Perſon, he is between both, and he is fit to make Peace; and therefore, he is *a Prince of Peace*, Iſa. ix. 6. And that he may be a Prince of Peace, he muſt be both, *An everlaſting Father* like God, and a young Child like unto Man: God to prevail with God, and a Man to engage for Man; and therefore he is called *our Peace*, Eph. ii. 14. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt enters in a Covenant with the Father, wherein he undertakes to bear our Curſe, and the Chaſtiſement of our Peace; he is content to be dealt with as the Rebel, *upon me, upon me be the Iniquity*; and ſo there comes an Interruption, as it were, of that bleſſed Peace he had with the Father; he is content that there ſhould be a Covering of Wrath ſpread over the Father's Love, that he ſhould handle the Son as an Enemy; and therefore it is, that Sinners are admitted as Friends, his Obedience takes away our Rebellion. The Cloud of the Lord's Diſpleaſure pours down upon him, that it might be fair Weather to us: The Armies of Curſes that were againſt us, encounter him, and he, by being overcome, overcometh; by being ſlain by Juſtice, Satan and Sin, overcometh all thoſe, *And killeth the Enmity on the Croſs, making Peace by his Blood*, Col. ii. 14, 15. Eph. ii. 15. And it is this Sacrifice that hath pacified Heaven, the ſweet Smell of it hath gone above, and made Peace in the high Places.

Here then is the Privilege of a Believer, to be at Peace with God, to be one with him; and this indeed is Life eternal, to be united unto the Fountain of Life, in whoſe Favour is Life, and whoſe loving Kindneſs is better than Life: Is not this a bleſſed Eſtate? Whatever a Man hath done againſt God, it is all forgiven and forgotten, ſhall never come in Remembrance. Are not Angels bleſſed who are Friends with God? Such is the Soul whoſe Sins are pardoned through Chriſt, their Sins are as if they never had been; the Soul is not only eſcaped that terrible Wrath of God, but being at Peace with God, all the Goodneſs that is communicable to Creatures, it ſhall partake of. *That they may be one, as we are one, that they may be perfect in one*, Joh. xvii. This Chriſt prayed for, and this was the End of his Death, to make of two one; ſo then the Glory that Chriſt is Partaker of with the Father, we muſt be Partakers of with him, and all this by Virtue of that Peace with God by him. Oh if ye knew what Enmity with God is; how would it indear and make precious Peace with him? The one engageth all that is in God

God, to be against a Man; the other engageth all that is in him to be for a Man: And is not he then a great One, whether he be a Friend or an Enemy? Is he not the best Friend and worst Enemy? Who hath most Power, yea, all Power to employ for whom he will, and against whom he will. What a blessed Change is it, to have God, of a consuming Fire, made a Sun, with Healing and Consolation? that the righteous, holy and just God, before whom no Flesh can stand, should accept so rebellious Sinners, and dwell among them? He had not only Power to destroy, but Law against us also. What a perfect Peace is it then, that the Judge becometh a merciful Father, and the Law of Ordinances is cancelled, and that Power imployed to keep Salvation to us, and us to Salvation? Ye who have made Peace and Attonement through Christ's Blood, rejoice in the Hope of the Glory of God; there wants nothing to make you compleatly blessed, but the clear and perfect Sight and Knowledge of your Estate before God.

Now when this Peace, which is made up in Heaven, is intimated unto the Conscience, then all the Tempests and Clouds of it evanish; and this is the Peace of believing, which is the Souls resting and quieting it self upon the believed Favour of God. There may be a great Calm above, *Good-will in God towards Men*, and yet great Tempests in this lower Region, *no Peace on Earth*. There is a Peace of Conscience, which is a Disease of Conscience, a Benumedness of Conscience, or a Sleep of Conscience, when Men walk in the Imagination of their own Hearts, and flatter themselves in their own Eyes, will not trouble themselves with the Apprehension of the Wrath of God, when Souls will not suffer their Sin, or the Curse to enter in: This is, that *no Peace*, which the Lord speaks often of, it is but a Dream; and when a Man awaketh, alas! what a dreadful Sight meets he with first, *sudden Destruction*; Sin enters in the Conscience, and the Law, the Strength of Sin; and so that Peace endeth in an eternal Disquietness: But what is the Reason, that notwithstanding of God's Justice and Mens Sins, so many are not afraid of him, so many pass the Time without Fear of Wrath and Hell? Is it not because they have taken Hold of his Strength and made Peace with them? No indeed, but because they know not the Power of his Anger, to fear him according to his Wrath. Who will spend one Hour in the Examination of his own Ways, in searching out Sins, in counting his Debt, till he find it past Payment? No, Men entertain the Thoughts of Sin, and Hell and Wrath, as if it were Coals in their Bosom, they shake them out, they like and love any Diversion from them. Oh, Ignorance maketh much Peace, I would say Security, which is so much worse than Fear, because it is so far from the Remedy, that it knoweth not the Evil and Danger. It is not the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, shining into the Soul that hath cleared them, but their perpetual Darkness that blindeth them. I say then, in the Name of Jesus Christ, that ye never knew the Peace of God, who knew not War with God; ye know not love, who have not known Anger; but this is the Souls true Peace and Tranquillity, when it is once awakned to see its Misery and Danger; how many Clouds overspread it; what Tempests blow; what Waves of Displeasure go over its Head? But when that Peace, which is made in the high Places, breaketh thro' the Cloud with a Voice, *Son be of good Comfort, thy Sins be forgiven thee*; when

when that Voice of the Spirit is uttered, presently at its Command the Wind and Waves obey; the Soul is calmed, as the Sea after a Storm; it is not only untroubled, but it is peaceable upon solid Grounds, because of the Word which speaks Peace in Christ. The Peace of the most of you, is such as ye were born and educated withal; it is not a created Peace, a spoken Peace, the Fruit of the Lips, and so no true Peace: Ye had not your Peace from the Word, but ye brought it to the Word; ye have no Peace after Trouble, and so it is not the Lord's Peace.

The Christian may have Peace, in Regard of his own Salvation and eternal Things, and in Regard of all Things that befalleth in Time; the first is, when the Conscience is sprinkled with the Blood of Jesus Christ, and getteth a good Answer to all the Challenges and Accusations of Conscience, and of the Law and Justice, 1 *Pet.* iii. 21. when the Spirit of God shines into the Soul, with a new Light to discover these Things that are freely given, 1 *Cor.* ii. 12. And this is the Sealing of the Spirit after believing, *Eph.* i. 13. When a Soul hath put to its Seal by believing God's Word, and hath acknowledged God's Truth and Faithfulness in his Word, the Spirit sealeth mutually the Believer's Faith, by more Holiness and the Knowledge of it: And how great Peace is this, when a Soul can look upon all its Iniquities, when they compass about a Man, and outward Trouble sharpeneth and setteth on Edge inward Challenges, and yet the Soul will not fear, it hath Answers to them all in Christ's Blood, *Psal.* xlix. 5. This is a greater Word than all the World can say; many Mens Fearlessness proceeded from Ignorance of Sin, their Iniquities were never set in Order before them; but if once they compassed them about, and Wrath, like a fiery Wall compass them about also, so that there were no escaping; Oh it would be more terrible than all the Armies of the World, ye would account little of a Kingdom, ye would exchange it for such a Word as *David* hath upon good Grounds.

Now I say again, the Soul that hath thus committed it self to him as a faithful Keeper, may have Peace in all Estates and Conditions; and this Peace floweth from that other Peace. There is a Peace which guards the Heart and Mind, *Phil.* iv. 6, 7. opposed to Carefulness and Anxiety; and this *Paul* is exemplary for, *I have learned in every Estate, therewith to be content, to want and abound*, &c. *Ver.* 11. The Soul of a Believer may be in an equal even Tenor and Disposition in all Conditions; it may possess it self in Patience; Impatience and Anxiety makes a Man not his own Man; he is not himself; he enjoys not himself; he is a Burden to himself, and is his own Tormenter; but if Souls were stayed upon God, certainly they would possess themselves, dwell securely within their own Breasts. We may find that the most Part of Men are exposed to all the Floods and Waves of the Times; they move inwardly, as Things are troubled outwardly; every Thing addeth Moment to their Grief or Joy; any Dispensation casteth the Ballance, and either weights them down with Discouragement, or lifteth them up with Vanity and Lightness of Mind; but the Believers Privilege is to be unmoved in the Midst of all the Tossings and Confusions of the Times, *Psal.* cxxviii. 1, 2. Ye would *be as Mount Zion, if ye trusted in God*; no Dispensation should enter into the Soul to cast the Ballance upon you; ye might stand upon your Rock Jesus Christ,

Christ, and look about the Estates, Persons, Affairs and Minds of Men, as a troubled Sea, fleeting, tossed up and down, and ye stand *and not be moved, or not greatly moved*, Psal. lxii. 2. And this is to be wise indeed. If I would describe a wise Man, I would say, he *is one Man*, beside him no Man is one with himself, but various, inconstant, changeable: He is unwise who is unlike himself, who changeth Persons according to Dispensations; Wisdom is the Stability of thy Times, and Faith is Wisdom; it establisheth as Mount *Zion*, so as a Man cometh out still one, in Prosperity not exalted, in Adversity not cast down, in every Estate content; and this is the Man who is blessed indeed. This were Wisdom, to will the same Thing and nill the same Thing, *Semper idem velle, atque idem nolle.* I need not (saith *Seneca*) add that Exception, that it be right which you desire, for no one Thing can universally and always please, if it be not good and right; so I say, he were both wise and happy, who had but one Grief and one Joy. Should not a Believer's Mind be calm and serene, seeing the true Light hath shined; it should be as the upper World, where no Blasts, no Storms or Clouds are to eclipse the Sun, or cloud it; while our Peace and Tranquillity is borrowed from outward Things, certainly it must change: But a Believer's Peace and Tranquillity of Mind having its Rise from above, from the unchangeable Word of the Lord, it needeth not to change according to the Vicissitudes of Providence. He needeth not to care before hand, because there is one who careth for him: And what needeth both to care? He needeth not be disquieted or troubled after, because it shall turn about to his Good; *All Things shall do so*, Rom. viii. 28. He needeth not be anxious about future Events, because he hath all his Burden cast upon another by Prayer and Supplication. What needeth he then take a needless Burden? Prayer will do that, which Care pretends and cannot do, and that without Trouble. He needeth not be troubled when Things are present, for he cannot by his Thought either add or diminish, take away or prevent. There is one good and necessary Thing that his Heart is upon, and that cannot be taken from him; and therefore all Things else are indifferent, and of small Concernment to him.

Now what wanteth such a Man of perfect Peace, who is reconciled to God, and at Peace within himself? when Peace guardeth the Heart and Mind within, compasseth it as a Castle or Garrison, to hold out all the vain Alarms of external Things. May not all the World be troubled about him? What though the Floods lift up their Voice, if they come not into the Soul? If he be one and the same in Peace and Trouble, Prosperity and Adversity, do not lament him in the one more than the other. It is the Mind that maketh your Condition good or bad: But yet, I say, the Believer hath likewise Peace with all the Creatures, which the World hath not, and even in this he is a privileged Man. *He is in League with the Stones of the Field, and in Peace in his Tabernacle*, Job. v. 23. *All Things are his, because he is Christ's, and all are Christ's*, who is the Possessor of Heaven and Earth, at least the righteous Heir of both, 1 *Cor.* iii. 21. The Unbeliever hath no Right to the Creature; though there be a Cessation for a Time between them and him, yet that is no Peace, for they will at Length be armed against him, they are Witnesses already against him,

and groan to God for the Corruption that Man's Sin hath ſubjected them unto. His Table is, it may be, full, yet it is a Snare unto him; he getteth Eaſe and Quietneſs outwardly: Nay, but it ſlayeth the Fool and deſtroyeth him. But the godly Man is at Peace thro' Chriſt's Blood with all Croſſes and Comforts; the Sting and Enmity of all Evils is taken away by Chriſt. Poverty is made a Friend, becauſe Chriſt was poor; Hunger and Thirſt is become a Friend, becauſe Chriſt was hungry and thirſty; Reproach and Contempt is at Peace with him, becauſe Chriſt was deſpiſed; Afflictions and Sorrows are reconciled to him, becauſe Chriſt was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Griefs: In a Word, Death itſelf is become a Friend, ſince Chriſt ſubdued it, by taſting of it. I may ſay, the worſt Things to a natural Man, are become beſt Friends to the Believer; the Grave keepeth his Body and Duſt in Hope: Death is a better Friend than Life, for it miniſters an Entry into Glory; it is the Door of eternal Life; it taketh down the Tabernacle of Mortality, that we may be cloathed upon with Immortality: In Sum, whatever it be, Chriſt hath ſtamped a new Quality on it; it cometh through his Hand, and ſo, if it be not good in it ſelf, yet it is good in the Uſe, and in his Appointment, *Rom.* viii. 21. If it be not good, yet it worketh together for our Good; it contributeth to our Good, becauſe it is in his skilful Hand; who can bring Good out of Evil, Peace out of Trouble. Oh that ye were perſuaded to be Chriſtians indeed, to love his Law, and truſt in him, great Peace have all ſuch; this were more to you nor Peace in the World; your Peace ſhould be as a River, for Abundance and Perpetuity; no Drought could dry it up; it ſhould run in Time as a large River, and when Time is done, it would emboſom itſelf in Eternity, in that Ocean of eternal Peace and Joy which the Saints are drowned in above; other Mens Peace is but like a Brook that dries up in Summer.

SERMON XIII.

Iſa. xxvi. 3. *Thou ſhalt keep him in perfect Peace, whoſe Mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee.*

CHRIST hath left us his Peace, as the great and comprehenſive Legacy, *My Peace I leave you*, John xiv. 27. And this was not Peace in the World that he enjoyed, you know what his Life was, a continual Warfare; but a Peace above the World, that paſſeth Underſtanding. *In the World you ſhall have Trouble, but in me you ſhall have Peace*, ſaith Chriſt, a Peace that ſhall make Trouble no Trouble: You muſt lay your Accounts to have ſuch a Life, as

as the Forerunner had; but withal, as he hath left us his Trouble, so hath he left us his Peace; the Trouble will have an End, but the Joy can no Man take from you: We have this sure Promise to rest upon, in Behalf of the Church, *Peace shall be on Israel*; a Peace that the World knoweth not, and so cannot assault it, or take it away. Oh that you would hearken to this Word, *That you would trust in the Lord, and stay upon your God, then should your Peace be as a River*, Isa. xlviii. 18. There is nothing more desired in Time of Trouble, than Peace; but all Peace is not better than War: Some necessary War is better than evil grounded Peace. The Kingdoms have been long in Pain, labouring to bring forth a safe and well-grounded Peace. But alas, we have been in Pain and brought forth Wind, when we looked for Peace, no Good came, and for Healing, behold Trouble. But how shall we arrive at our desired Haven? Certainly, if Peace be well grounded, it must have Truth for its Foundation, and Righteousness for its Companion; *Truth must spring out of the Earth, and Righteousness look down from Heaven.* This were the compendious Way for publick Peace, if every Man would make his own Peace with God: There are Controversies with God, between King, Nobles and People; and therefore, God fomenteth the Wars in the Kingdoms: If you would have these ended, make Peace with God in Christ, by flying in unto him, and resting on him; more trusting in God would dispatch our Wars; trusting in the Arm of Flesh continueth them. Always whatever be, Peace or War, here is the Business that more concerns you, your eternal Peace and Safety; and, if ye were more careful of this, to save your own Souls, you would help the Publick more. If you could be once perswaded to be Christians indeed, we needed not press many Duties in Reference to the Publick; and until you be once perswaded to save yourselves, by flying from the Wrath to come, it is in vain to speak of publick Duties to you. We do therefore declare unto you the Way of obtaining perfect Peace, Peace as a River; if you will quite all Self-confidences, fly from yourselves as your greatest Enemies, and trust your Souls unto the Promise in Jesus Christ, and lean all your Weight on him, we assure you, your Peace shall run abundantly and perpetually. Whoever trusteth in Creatures, in uncertain Riches, in worldly Peace, in whatsoever Thing, beside the only living and glorious Lord, we perswade him, that his Peace shall fail as a Brook: All Things in this World shall deal deceitfully with you, as a Brook which is blackish, by Reason of Ice; what Time it waxeth warm, it shall evanish; you that looked and waited for Water in it, shall be confounded, because you hoped and are ashamed, because of your Expectation, *Job* vi. 15. *&c.* The Summer shall dry up your Peace, and what will you do? But if you pour out your Souls on him, and trust in the Fountain of living Waters, you shall not be ashamed, for your Peace shall be as a River. The Elephant is said to trust, that he can drink out a River; but he is deceived, for he may drink again, it runs, and shall run for ever. If any Thing would essay to take your Peace from you, it is a vain Attempt, for it runs like a River; it may be shallower and deeper, but it cannot run dry, because of the living Fountain it proceedeth from. There is no other Thing can be made sure, all be-

beſides this is uncertain, and this only is worthy to be made ſure; nothing beſides this can give you Satisfaction.

Are your Hearts asking within you, how ſhall this Peace be attained? If you deſire to know it, conſider theſe Words, *Whoſe Heart is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſts in thee.* It concerneth you much to know well, what this is, that your eternal Peace depends on.

Truſting in God, is the leaning of the Soul's Weight on God, the Soul hath a Burden above it, heavy and unſupportable, and this the Truſter caſteth upon God; And ſo *he is a loadened and weary Man, whom Chriſt exhorteth to come to him, and he ſhall find Eaſe for his Soul,* Mat. xi. 28. Prov. iii. 5. Leaning to ourſelf, and truſting in God are oppoſed, *Pſal.* xxii. 10. Truſting is exponed, to be *a caſting upon God,* Pſal. xxv. 1. It is called, *a lifting up the Soul to him.* This one Thing is included in the Boſom of Truſting and Believing, that a Man hath many Burdens too heavy for him, which would ſink him down: The Believer is ſuch a one as *Jehoſaphat,* 2 Chron. xx. 12. *O Lord, we have no Might againſt this great Company, neither know we what to do.* O Lord, I have an Army of Iniquities againſt me, a great Company compaſſeth me about; an Army of Curſes as numerous as mine Iniquities, both are innumerable as the Sand of the Sea; I have no Might againſt them, neither know I what to do: Nay, the Lord is againſt me, his Wrath is like the roaring of a Lyon, what can I do againſt him? The firſt beginning of truſting in God, is diſtruſting ourſelves: And until a Man ſee his Duty and Burden beyond his Strength, his Burden greater than he can bear, you will never perſwade him to come to Jeſus Chriſt, and lean on him. We will not preach any ſuch Doctrine, as to diſcharge any to come to Chriſt, till they be wearied and loaden; for, when a Man conceiveth that he wanteth that Weariedneſs, whether ſhall he go to find it? Is there any Fountain, but one, Jeſus Chriſt, both of Grace and Preparations to it, if any ſuch be? But this we preach unto you, that until you be wearied and loaden, you will not caſt your Burden on Jeſus. We need not diſcharge you to come till you be ſuch, for certainly you will not come. This is the deſperate Wickedneſs of our Hearts, that we will never forſake ourſelves, till we can do no better; until Men be as *David, I looked on the Right-hand, and there was none would know me,* Refuge failed me, certainly they will not cry to God: Men will look round about them, before they will look up above them, they will caſt the Burden of their Souls upon any Thing, upon their own Sorrow and Contrition, upon their Reſolution to amend, upon external Duties and Privileges, upon civil Honeſty, until all theſe ſuccumb under the Weight of their Salvation; and then, it may be, they will ask after him who bare our Griefs. I would not willingly ſpeak of Preparations to Faith, becauſe it putteth Men upon ſearching ſomething in themſelves, upon faſhioning their own Hearts, and trimming them to come to Chriſt; whereas there is nothing can be acceptable to him, but what cometh from him. But I think all that Men intend, who ſpeak of Preparations, may be gained this Way, by holding out unto Men, the Impoſſibility of coming to Chriſt, till they be emptied of themſelves; not that the one is a Thing going before, to be done by us, but becauſe they are all one; it is

one

one Motion of the Soul to come out of itself, and in to Jesus: It is one Thing really to distrust ourselves, and to trust in him; and by this Means, when the true Nature of Faith itself is holden out, Men might examine themselves rather by it, whether they have it, nor by the Preparations of it.

But to come to our Purpose, when the Soul is pressed under Burdens of Sin and Misery, of Duty and Insufficiency, and Inability to do it, then the Gospel discovereth unto the wearied Soul, a Place of Reposing and Rest. The Lord hath established *Christ Jesus, an Ensign to the People*, these who seek unto him shall find *his Rest glorious*, Isa. xi. 10. When there is discovered in us, all Emptiness and Inability, yea Impossibility to save ourselves, or perform any Duty, then are we led to Jesus Christ, as one who is come with *Grace and Truth, in whom it hath pleased the Father all Fulness should dwell*; and the turning of the Soul over upon him, is trusting in him. You would not mistake this, trusting in the Lord in its first and most native acting, is not always Perswasion of his Good-will and Love in particular; no, the Soul meets first with a general Promise, holding out his Good-will in general, and the Soul closeth with this, a Thing both good and true, *as faithful in itself, and worthy of all Acceptation.* This is it that we must first meet with, an all-sufficient Saviour, able to save to the utmost all that come to him; and the Soul's accepting of that blessed Saviour on the Terms he is offered, this is believing in him, and trusting to him, as a complete Saviour.

Now when the Soul hath disburdened itself upon God, and set to its Seal to the Truth of the Promises in the Gospel for Salvation; if the Light of the Spirit shine to discover this unto it, that it hath laid hold on *his Strength, who is able to save to the utmost*, then it becometh perswaded of his Love in particular; and this is rather the sealing after believing, than believing itself.

When once Men have hazarded their Souls upon his Word, and trusted in him, then they may trust in him for all Particulars: *He that hath given his Son for us, will he not with him give all Things?* This therefore is the continual Recourse of a Believer, from discovered Emptiness and Insufficiency in himself, to travel unto the Fulness and Strength of Jesus Christ, that his Strength may be perfected in Weakness: Yea, when all Things seem contrary, and his Dispensation writes bitter Things against us, yet ought we to trust in him, *Job* xiii. 15. There is a Peace of Wilfulness and Violence in Faith, that will look always towards his Word, whatever be threatned to the contrary.

Now, from this Faith in God, floweth a constant Dependence and Stayedness on him, *They are stayed on him, because they trusted in him*; for Faith discovereth in God, such Grounds, that it may lean its Weight upon him without wavering and changing. It considereth his Power, his Good-will and his Faithfulness; he is able to perform, he is willing to do it, and he is faithful, because he hath promised. His Greatness and Power is a high Rock, higher than we, that Faith leadeth us unto; His Love and Good-will in Jesus Christ, maketh an open Entry, and ready Access to that Rock; and Faithfulness engageth both to give a Shelter and Refuge to the poor Sinner. Would a Soul be any more tossed, would there be any Place for wavering

vering and doubting, if Souls considered his excellent loving Kindness, and great Goodness laid up and treasured with him, for these that trust in him? *Psal.* xxxvi. 7. Who would not put their Trust under the Shadow of his Wings, and think themselves safe? Again, if his eternal Power were pondered, how he is able to effectuate whatever he pleaseth, what everlasting Arms he hath, that by a Word supports the Frame of the World, what he can do, if he stretch out his Arm; and then, if these two immutable Things, *Heb.* vi. 18. his Promise and his Oath were looked upon, how he hath ingaged himself in his Truth, and sworn in his Holiness; Would not a Soul ly safely between these three? What strong Consolation would such a threefold Consideration yield? Would any Wind or Tempest blow within these Walls mounted up to Heaven?

Stayedness on God is nothing else, but the Fixedness of Believing and Trusting, *Psal.* cxii. 7, 8. *His Heart is fixed, trusting in God, his Heart is established.* It is even the mature and ripe Age of Faith: Faith while it is yet in Infancy, in its tender Years, it neither can endure Storms, nor can it confirm us in them; but when it hath sprung up and grown in that Root of *Jesse*, when it is rooted and established in Jesus Christ, then it establisheth the Soul: Faith abiding in him and taking Root groweth confirmed, as a Tree that cannot easily be moved; and if you establish Faith, you shall be established.

There are two Particulars which I conceive the trusting Soul is stayed on. *First*, In the Meditation of God. *Secondly*, In Expectation from him of all good Things. When I say the Meditation of God, I take in both Contemplation and Affection. The most Part of Men have but few Thoughts of God at all, even those who trust in him, do not consider sufficiently what a One he is in whom they believe. If Faith were vigorous and lively, it would put Men to often thinking on him, seeking to know him in his glorious Names, the Mind would be stayed upon this glorious Object, as the most mysterious and wonderful One. How throng are Mens Minds with their Vanities? *When they awake, they are not still with God*; the Meditation of him is a Burden to them, any other Thing getteth more Time and Thoughts. But Meditation addeth Affection to Contemplation; Men may think long upon the Heavens and their Course, but their Affections are not ravished with them: But this is the Soul stayed on God, when the Soul's Desires are towards the Remembrance of his Name, then Affection stayeth the Mind upon what it pitcheth on; and certainly the Mind giveth but passing Looks, constrained Thoughts where the Heart is not: Here is *David*'s Meditation, *Psal.* i. *My Delight is in the Law of the Lord.* The Soul of a Believer should be constant and fixed in the Consideration of God, till he be wholly engaged to Admiration and Wondering. *O Lord how excellent is thy Name*, Psal. viii. 1. *And who is like unto thee?* You all say that you believe in God, and know his Power, you know he is good, he is merciful, just, longsuffering, faithful, &c. But what is all this Knowledge but Ignorance, and your Light Darkness, when it doth not press you to put your Trust in his Name? You know; nay, but you consider not what you know: This is trusting, when the Mind is stayed on what it knoweth, when all the scattered Thoughts

Thoughts and Affections are called home, and united in one, to be exercised about this comprehensive Object, *The Lord our God*. It is not Want of Knowledge destroyeth you, but want of Consideration of what you know, and this is Brutishness. Mens Hearts do not carry Seal and Stamp of their Knowledge, because Thoughts of God and his Word are but as Passengers that go thro' a Land, as Lightning going thro' the Mind, but warms it not; and so their Practice carrieth no Impression of it either. How base is it for those who have God for their God, to be so ignorant of him? Would not any Man willingly travel about his own Possessions? Have you such a large Portion Believers, and should you be taken up with other Vanities? Should your Hearts and Minds be stayed on them, more than the living God? There is a great Vanity and Levity in Mens Minds. *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Men that they are Vanity.* There is an Unsettledness of Spirit, we cannot pitch upon that on which we may be stayed; and so all the Spirits of Men are in a continual Motion from one Thing to another, for nothing giveth complete Satisfaction, and therefore it must go and try one after another, to see if it can find in it; what it found not in the former: And such is the Inconstancy of the Spirit, that it licketh up its Vomit, and what Thing it refused, it eateth it up as its Meat: The Time is spent in chooſing and refusing, rejecting one Thing, and taking another, and again returning to what you have rejected. Thus are Men tossed up and down, and unstable in all their Ways, as a Ship without ballasting. Now, Faith and Trusting in God is the Ballast and Weight of this inconstant Ship: It is the Anchor to stay it from being driven to and fro. If once Men would pitch upon this one Lord, who hath in himself eminently all the scattered Perfections of Creatures, and infinitely more, if you would consider him, and meditate on him, till your Souls loved him, would you not be ravished with him? Would you not build your House beside him, and dwell in the Meditation of his Name? This would fix and establish you in Duties, *When I awake, I am still with thee.* A little Searching and Experience discovereth Emptiness in all beside; and therefore is it, that the Soul removeth sooner from such a particular Creature, than it expected: But here is *One that is past finding out*; the more I search and find, I find him the more above what I can search and find. The Creatures are but painted and fair in Mens Apprehension, and at a Distance, but the near Enjoyment of them discovereth the Delusion, and sendeth a Man away ashamed, because he trusted. But the Lord God is, and there is no other, he is not as Waters that fail, no Liar, he is an everlasting Fountain, the more you dig and draw, it runs the faster, he will never send any away ashamed that trust in him, because they shall find more than they expected.

Therefore the Soul that is stayed on Meditation of God, and knoweth him certainly, will be fixed in Expectation from him. Our Expectation from the Creatures changeth, because it is oft frustrate, Disappointment meets it, it is above what is in the Creature, and so it must meet with Disappointment; but as he is above our Meditation, so is he far above our Expectation: And if a Man's Experience answer his Hope, he hath no Reason to change his Hope.

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The Lord hath often done Things we looked not for, but we never looked for any Thing, according to the Grounds of the Word, but it was done, or a better than it. He doth not always answer our Limitations; but if he give Gold, when we sought Silver, are we not answered? Are we disappointed? There are three Things that use most to disquiet and toss Mens Spirits, Sin and Wrath, future Events, and present Calamities: Faith establisheth the Soul on God in all these, and suffereth it not to be driven too and fro with these Winds; it finds a Harbour and Refuge in God from all these. If he be pursued by the Avenger of Blood, God's Wrath and Justice, here is an open City of Refuge that he may run to and be safe. If Iniquities compass me about, yet I will not fear, but oppose unto that great Company, the many Sufferings and Obedience of Jesus Christ. My Conscience challengeth and writeth bitter Things against me, yet I have an Answer *in that Blood that speaketh better Things nor Abel's.* If Sins prevail, he will purge them away: His Mercy is above all my Sin, and his Vertue and Power is above my Sin, *He hath promised, and will he not do it?* Oft-times Mens Souls are perplexed and tossed about future Events, careful for To-morrow; this is a great Torment of Spirit, it cutteth and divideth it, putteth a Man to his own Providence, as if there were no God: But he that trusteth in God, is established in this, *His Heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*; he hath committed his Soul to him, and why may he not his Body? He hath nothing but his Promise for eternal Salvation, and may not that same suffice for temporal? He careth for me (saith Faith) why then should we both care about one Thing? *He hath given his Son for me*, the most precious Gift, which the World cannot match, *and will he not with him give all these lesser Things?* And thus the Believer incloseth himself within the Father's Love and Providence, and is fixed, not fearing evil Tidings; for what Tidings can be Evil, seeing our Father hath the sovereign disposing of all Affairs, and knoweth what is best for us? Present Dispensations often shake Men, and driveth them too and fro: Their Feet slip, and are not established, *Thou hid thy Face, and I was troubled.* But if you trusted in God, and considered what is in him to oppose to all Difficulties and Calamities, you would say, *I shall not be moved, tho' the Floods lift up their Voice.* If you believed his Love, would not this sweeten all his Dealing? *He maketh all work together for Good.* Sovereignity, Righteousness and Mercy, are sure and firm Ground to stand upon in all Storms. You may cast Anchor at any of those, and ly secure. *It is the Lord, let him do what he peaseth.* This was enough to quiet the Saints in old Times. *Should he give Account of his Matters to us? Shall the Clay say to the Potter, why is it thus?* His absolute Right by Creation, maketh him beyond all Exception, do what he pleases: But beside this, he is pleased and condescendeth to reason with us, and give Account of his Matters, to testify to our Conscience, that he is righteous in all his Ways. It was the Ground of *Jeremiah's* settling, *Lam.* iii. *It is of the Lord's Mercy that we are not consumed*: It should have allayed and stayed *Job*, know this, thou art punished less than thy Iniquities deserve; who will set a Time to plead with him? Shall any be found righteous before him? And this might

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stop all Mens Mouths, and put them in the Dust to keep Silence, seeing he hath Law to do infinitely more than he doth, why should not we rather proclaim his Clemency, than argue him so very hard? If to both those, you shall add the Consideration of his Mercy, that all his Paths are Mercy and Truth unto you, even when he correcteth most severely, so that you may bless him as well for Rods, as for Meat and Cloathing, and count yourself blessed when you are taught by the Rod and the Word, the one speaking to the other, and the other sealing its Instruction: If you believed that it were a Fruit of his Love, *He chasteneth every Son whom he loveth*, that because he will not let you depart from him, will not let you settle upon a present World, and forget your Country above; therefore he compasseth you about with Hedges of Thorns to keep in your Way; and therefore he maketh this World bitter and unpleasant, that you may have no continuing City: If all this were believed, would not the Soul triumph with *Paul, What can separate me from the Love of God?* not past Things, for all my Sins are blotted out, and shall be remembered no more; not present Things, for they work to Good, and are a Fruit of his Love; not Things to come, for that is to come which shall more declare his Love than what is past. Would not a Soul sleep securely within the Compass of this Power, this Love, and Faithfulness of God, without Fear of dashing or sinking?

Now, judge whether a perfect Peace may not flow from all this; may it not be a perfect Calm, when the Mountains that environ go up to Heaven? Not only doth the Soul trust in God, but God keepeth the trusting Soul in Peace. He is the Creator of Peace, and the Preservator of it, *I create Peace, I keep him in Peace*: The same Power and Virtue is required to the preserving of a Thing, and the first Being of it. Our Faith and Hope in God, is too weak an Anchor to abide all Storms: Our Cords would break, our Hands faint and weary, but *he is the everlasting God, who faileth not, and wearieth not*, he holdeth an invisible Grip of us, *We are kept by his Power to Salvation*, and we are kept by his Power in Peace: *Thy Right-hand holdeth me*, saith *David*, and this helpeth me to pursue thee. What maketh Believers inexpugnable, impregnable, is it their Strength? No indeed, *But Salvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks*: Almighty Power is a strong Wall tho' invisible, this Power worketh in us and about us.

Now Believers, pity the World about you, that knoweth not this Peace: When they ly secure, and cry Peace, Peace; alas, they are a City open without Walls as the plain Field, there is no Keeper there, nothing to hold off Destruction. Entertain your own Peace, do not grieve the Spirit who hath sealed it: If you return to Folly after he hath spoken Peace to you, I perswade you, you shall not maintain this Peace; there may be Peace with God, but no Peace in thy Conscience, as long as the Whoredoms of thy Heart are to the fore: Thou may be secure, but Security is worse than Fear. Know this, that continuing in a Course of Sin, entertaining any known Sin, shall trouble thy Peace. If God hath spoken Peace to thee, thou shalt not lodge that Enemy in Peace, *Great Peace have they that love thy Law*. Obedience and Delight in it doth not make Peace, but it is the Way of Peace; and much Me-

ditation on the bleſſed Word of God, is the moſt excellent Mean to preſerve this Peace, if it be ſecured with much Correſpondence with Heaven by Prayer, *Phil.* iv. 6, 7. If you would disburden your Hearts daily at the Throne of Grace, Peace ſhould guard and keep your Heart, and then your Peace would be perfect indeed. But becauſe your Faith is here imperfect, your Requeſts few and infervent, your Follies and Iniquities many; therefore is this promiſed Perfection a Stranger to the moſt Part of Chriſtians. Always what we want here, we muſt expect to have made up ſhortly: Heaven is a Land of Peace, and all Things are there in full Age: Here all are in Minority, it is but yet Night; but when the Day ſhall break up, and the Shadows fly away, and the Prince of Peace ſhall appear and be revealed, he ſhall bring Peace and Grace both with him, and both perfect. To him be Praiſe and Glory.

SERMON XIV.

Iſa. lix. 20. *And the Redeemer ſhall come unto Sion, to them that turn*, &c.

DOCTRINES, as Things, have their Seaſons and Times, every Thing is beautiful in its Seaſon; ſo there is no Word of Truth, but it hath a Seaſon and Time in which it is beautiful: And indeed that is a great Part of Wiſdom, to bring forth every Thing in its Seaſon, to diſcern when and where, and to whom it is pertinent and edifying, to ſpeak ſuch and ſuch Truths. But there is one Doctrine that is never out of Seaſon; and therefore it may be preached in Seaſon and out of Seaſon, as the Apoſtle commandeth. Indeed to many Hearts it is always out of Seaſon, and eſpecially in Times of Trouble and Anguiſh, when it ſhould be moſt ſeaſonable, when the Opportunity may commend the Beauty of it; but in itſelf, and to as many as have ever found the Power of it on their Hearts, it is always the moſt ſeaſonable and pertinent Doctrine, I mean the very ſubject Matter of this Text; the News of a Redeemer to captive Sinners; it is in itſelf ſuch glad Tidings, and ſhines with ſo much Beauty and Splendor to troubled Sinners, that it caſteth abroad a Luſtre and Beauty on the Feet of the Meſſengers that carry it, *Iſa.* xl. It is a Cordial in Affliction, whether outward or inward; and it is withal the only true Comfort of Proſperity, it allayeth the Bitterneſs of Things that croſs us, and filleth up the Emptineſs of Things that pretend to pleaſe us; it giveth Sweetneſs to the one, and true Sweetneſs to the other. Reaſon then, that ſhould always be welcome to us, which we ſtand always in need of, that it ſhould always be new and freſh in

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our Affection, which is always recent and new in its Operation and Efficacy toward us. Other News, how great or good soever, suppose they were able to fill the Hearts of all in a Nation with Joy, yet they grow stale, they lose their Vertue within few Days. What Footsteps or Remainder is of all the Triumphs and Trophies of Nations, of all their Solemnities for their victorious Success at home and abroad. These great News, which once were the Subject of the Discourse of, and Delight of many Thousands, who report them now with Delight: So these Things that may cause Joy and Triumph to some at this Time, as they cannot choose but make more Hearts sad than glad; so they will quickly lose, even that Efficacy they have, and become tasteless, as the White of an Egg, to them that are most ravished with them. But my Beloved, here is glad Tidings of a Redeemer come to *Zion* to save Sinners, which have no Occasion of Sadness in them to any, but to them who are not so happy as to consider them, or believe them; and they are this Day after many hundred, I may say thousand Years since they were first published, as green and recent, as refreshing to wearied Souls as ever they were; yea, such is the Nature of them, and such an everlasting Spring of Consolation is in them, that the oftner they be told, and the more they be considered, the sweeter they are; they grow green in old Age, and bring forth Fruit, and are fat and flourishing; and indeed it is the never dying Vertue and everlasting Sap of this Word of Life, that maketh the Righteous so, *Psal.* xcii. 14. This Word of a Redeemer at the first publishing, and for a long Time, was but like Waters issuing out from under the Threshold, and then they came to the Ancles, when it was publish'd to a whole Nation; but still the longer it swells, the higher above Knees and Loins, till it be a great inexhausted River, and thus it runs at this Day thro' the World, and hath a healing Virtue and a quickning Virtue, *Ezek.* xlvii. and a sanctifying Virtue, *Ver.* 9, 12. Now this is our Errand to you, to invite you to come to these Waters; if ye thirst, come to be quenched; if ye thirst not, ye have so much the more Need to come, because your Thirst after Things that will not profit you, will destroy you, and your Unsensibleness of your Need of this, is your greatest Misery.

That the Words may be more lively unto us, we may call to mind the greatest and deepest Design that hath been carried on in the World, by the Maker and Ruler of the World, is the Marriage of Christ his Son with the Church; this was primely intended when he made the World, as a Palace to celebrate it into; this was especially aimed at, when he joined *Adam* and *Eve*, in the Beginning of Time, together in Paradise, that the second *Adam* should be more solemnly joined to the Church, at the End of Time, in the Paradise of Heaven: And this the Apostle draws out as the Samplar and Arch-copy of all Marriages and Conjunctions in the Creatures, *Eph.* v. Now this being the great Design of God, of which all other Things done in Time are but the Footsteps and low Representations. But the great Question is, how this shall be brought about, because of the great Distance and huge Disproportion of the Parties, *He being the Brightness of the Father's Glory*, and we being wholly eclipsed and darkened since our Fall; *He higher than the Heaven of Hea-*

vens, and we fallen as low as Hell into a Dungeon of Darkneſs and Miſery, led away by Sin and Satan, lying in that abominable Poſture, repreſented in *Ezek.* xvi. Not only unſuitable to engage his Love, but fit to procure even the Loathing of all that paſs by.

Now it being thus, the Words do furniſh us with the noble Reſolution of the Son, about the taking away of the Diſtance, and the royal Offer of the Father, to make the Match hold the better, both flowing from infinite Love, in the moſt free and abſolute Manner can be imagined. The Son's Reſolution, which is withal the Father's Promiſe, is to come into the World firſt, to redeem his Spouſe, and ſo to marry her; *And the Redeemer ſhall come unto Sion*, &c. The Father's Offer (that he might not be wanting to help it forward) is to diſpone, by an irrevocable Covenant, having the Force of an abſolute Donation, his Word and Spirit to Chriſt and his Seed, to the Church, even to the End of the World, *Ver.* 21. *As for me, this is my Covenant.* The Son hath done his Part, and is to expreſs his infinite Love, infinite Condeſcendency, and ſtooping below his Majeſty: Now, as for me, I will ſhew my good Will to it, in my infinite Bounty and Riches of Grace to the Church; he hath given himſelf for her, I will give my Spirit; and thus it cannot but hold.

We ſhall ſpeak a Word then of theſe three; *firſt*, What Eſtate and Condition Chriſt findeth his Church into, out of which ſhe muſt be taken to be his Spouſe; then what Way and Courſe is laid down by the Council of Heaven, to fill up the infinite Diſtance between Chriſt and Sinners; and to cloſe all, we ſhall ſhew you the Suitableneſs of theſe Promiſes, and the wonderful Fitneſs of this Doctrine to the Church, at this Time *Iſaiah* preached it, and at all Times.

The firſt is ſuppoſed in the Words; Redemption ſupponeth Captivity or Slavery, Redemption of Perſons importeth Captivity and Slavery of theſe Perſons, and Redemption of other Things that belong to Perſons, importeth Sale or Alienation of our Right to them. Of both, perſonal Redemption is the greateſt and moſt difficult; yet both we have Need of, for our Eſtate and Fortune (ſo to ſpeak) is loſt, *For all Men have ſinned and come ſhort of the Glory of God*, Rom. iii. 23. That Inheritance of eternal Life, we have mortgaged it, and given away our Right to it; the Favour of God and the Bleſſedneſs of Communion with him, was *Adam*'s Birth-right, and by a free Donation was made his proper Inheritance and Poſſeſſion, to be tranſmitted to his Poſterity: But O! how, for how ſmall a Thing did he give it away, for a little Taſte of an Apple he ſold his Eſtate; and both he and we may lament over it, as the King that was conſtrained to render himſelf and all his Army for Want of Water, when he taſted it, for how ſmall a Thing (ſaith he) have I loſt my Kingdom? Then our Perſons are in a State of Bondage, in Captivity and Slavery; Captives under the Wrath of God, and Slaves or Servants to Sin. There needed no greater Difference and Deformity between Chriſt and us, than this, our Servitude and Bondage to Sin, which truly is the baſeſt and moſt abominable Vaſſalage in the World; the Abaſement of the higheſt Prince, to the vileſt Servitude under the baſeſt Creatures in his Dominion, is but a Shadow of that loathſome and ugly Poſture of our Souls. This Servitude doth in a Manner unman us, and transform us into Beaſts;

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certainly it is that, which in the holy Eyes of God, is more loathsome than any Thing beside; he seeth not that Deformity in Poverty, Nakedness, Sickness, Slavery; let a Man be as miserable as *Job* on his Dung-hill, it is not so much that, as the unseen and undiscerned Posture and Habit of their Souls, that he abominateth. Now what a Match is this, for the highest and holiest Prince, the Son of the greatest King, and Heir of all Things? But if you add to this Slavery, that Captivity under the Curse and Wrath of God, that all Men are shut up and inclosed in the Prison of God's faithful and irrevocable Sentence of Condemnation, and given over by the righteous Judgment of God, to be kept by Satan in everlasting Chains of Darkness: He keepeth Men now, by the invisible Cords of their own Sins, but these Chains of Darkness are reserved for both him and Men. Now indeed, this superaddeth a great Difficulty to the Business, the other may be a Difficulty to his Mind and Affection, because there is nothing to procure Love, but all that may inforce Hatred and Loathing; but suppose his infinite Love could come over this Stay, could leap over this Mountain by the Freedom of it; yet there is a greater Impediment in the Way, that may seem difficult to his Power, and it is the Justice and Power of God, inclosing Sinners and shutting them up for eternal Wrath, till a due Satisfaction be had from, or for them: You see then, how infinite the Distance is betwixt him and us, and how great the Difficulty is to bring about this intended Union. Angels were sent with flaming Swords to encompass the Tree of Life, and keep it from Man, but Man is environed by the Curse of the Almighty God, the Justice, the Faithfulness, and the Power of God do guard or set a Watch about him, that there is no Access to him to save him; but by undergoing the greatest Danger, and undertaking the greatest Party that ever was dealt withal, and the strictest and severest too.

This being the Case then, the Distance being so vast, and the Difficulty so great, the Distance being twofold, between his Nature and ours, and between our Quality and his; an infinite Distance between his divine Nature and our Flesh, and besides an extreme Contrariety between the Holiness of his Nature, and the Sinfulness of ours; such a Repugnancy, as there is no Reconciliation of them. You know what *Paul* speaketh of the Marriage of Christians with Idolaters; how much more will it hold here? *What Communion can be between Light and Darkness, between God and Belial?* Is it possible these can be reduced to Amity, and brought to so near an Union? Yet for all this, it is possible; but Love and Wisdom must find out the Way. Infinite Love and infinite Wisdom consulting together, what Distance can they not swallow up? What Difficulty can they not overcome?

And here you have it, the Distance undertaken to be removed, both by the Father and the Son, (for all this While we can do nothing to help it forward; while the blessed Plot is going on, we are posting the faster to our own Destruction) and this is the Way condescended upon; *first*, To fill up that wide Gap between his divine spiritual Nature, and our mortal fleshly Nature, it is agreed upon, that the Son shall come in our Flesh, and be made Partaker of Flesh and Blood with the Children; and this is meaned by this Promise, *The Redeemer shall come to Sion*; which is plainly expressed by his

his own Mouth, *John* xvi. 28. *I come forth from the Father, and come into the World.* There being such a Distance between his Majesty and our Baseness, Love maketh him stoop down and humble himself to the very State of a Servant, *Phil.* ii. 7, 8. And thus the Humiliation of Christ filleth up the first Distance, for Love and Majesty cannot long dwell together, *Nec in una sede morantur, Majestas & amor*; but Love will draw Majesty down below itself, to meet with the Object of it. This was the great Journey Christ took to meet with us, and it is downward below himself; but his Love hath chosen it, to be like us, tho' he should be unlike himself. How divinely doth the Divine Apostle speak of it, *And the Word was made Flesh, and he dwelt among us.* John i. 14. And therefore the Children of *Adam*, may in Verity say of him, what the holy Trinity, in a holy Irony spoke of Man, *Lo he is become as one of us.* It was a singular and eminent Privilege conferred upon Man in his first Creation, that the Trinity in a Manner consulted about him, *Let us make Man after our Image*; but now when Man hath lost that Image, to have such a Result of the Council of the Trinity about it, let one of us be made Man, to make up the Distance between Man and us; O! what Soul can rightly conceive it without Ravishment and Wonder, without an Extasy of Admiration and Affection, that the Lord should become a Servant; the Heir of all Things be stript naked of all; the Brightness of the Father's Glory, be thus ecclipsed and darkened; and in a Word, that which comprehendeth all Wonders in the Creation, who made all Things, he himself made of a Woman; and God became a Man, and all this out of his infinite Love, to give a Demonstration of Love to the World; so high a Person abased, to exalt so base and low as we are: There is a Mystery in this, a great Mystery, a Mystery of Wisdom, to swallow up the Understanding with Wonder, and a Mystery of Love, to ravish the Hearts of Men with Affection. Depths of both, in the Emptiness of the Son of God. The Prophet doubting what was commanded, to seek a Sign, whether in Heaven above, or in the Depth beneath; but what he would not ask, God gave in his great Mercy, *Behold a Virgin shall conceive a Son, and they shall call his Name Immanuel*; A Sign indeed from Heaven, and the Height of Heaven, because he is God, and a Sign from the Depth beneath too, because he is man, *God with us*, and so composed to unite Heaven and Earth together; *God with us*, that he might at Length bring us to be with God. He became *Immanuel*, that he might make us *Immelanu*. If that was given as Tidings of great Joy, and as the highest and deepest Sign of Love and Favour, at that Time to uphold the fainting Church, O! how much more may it now comfort us, when it is not a Virgin shall conceive, but a Virgin hath conceived; may not the Joy be increased, that the Redeemer is not to come, but come already, and hath made up that wide Separation which was between us and him, by his low Condescendency to his Union with our Nature. This is one Step of Advancement towards that happy Marriage, that *the whole Creation seems to groan and travel for*, Rom. viii. 22. But yet there is a great Difficulty in the Way; we are in a State of Captivity, we are Prisoners of Justice, have sold ourselves and our Happiness; and now our natural Inheritance lies in the Lake of

of Fire and Brimstone, Heirs of Wrath, concluded under the Curse of God; and indeed this was insuperable to all Flesh, neither Men nor Angels could ransom us from this: The Redemption of the Soul of Man is so precious, and the Redemption of the Inheritance of Man, (that is Heaven,) is so precious too, that none in Heaven or Earth can be found, that can pay the Price of them, so that it would have ceased for ever. And here the great Design of Christ's Union with Sinners, would have been marred and miscarried, if himself had not undertaken to overcome this too; and indeed, as there could none be found to open the Seals of the Book of God's Decrees concerning his Church, none worthy in Heaven or Earth but the Lamb, the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*: He prevailed to open it, and loose the Seals thereof, *Rev.* v. 3, 4, 5. So there could none be found in Heaven or Earth, neither under the Earth, worthy to undertake or accomplish this Work, or able to open the Seals of the Book of God's Curses, or to blot out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us, or to open the Prison of Death into which Man was shut up: None I say, hath been found worthy, or prevailed, but the Lamb of God and Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*; and therefore the four and twenty Elders that sit round about the Throne, and the four Beasts, or innumerable Company of Angels, and Spirits of just Men made perfect, fell down before the Lamb, every one of them with Harps, and they sung a new Song, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power and Riches, and Wisdom and Strength, and Honour and Glory, and Blessing*, for thou *hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood*. And every Creature says *Amen* to this, and consents to this, to do him Homage; to him who alone was worthy, and as willing to do it, as worthy for it. I think the 16th Verse of this Chapter gives us a sensible Representation of this. The preceeding Discourse from the Beginning, holding out the sinful and deplorable Condition of that People, and in them, as a Type of the desperate Wickedness of all Mankind, and withal their desperate Misery, for *Paul*, *Rom.* iii. maketh the Application for us; and from this, concludeth all under Sin, and so all under Wrath, all guilty, that every Mouth may be stopt; Men waiting for Light, and behold Obscurity, for Brightness but walking in Darkness, gropping for the Wall, like the Blind, stumbling at Noon-day, as in the Night, and in desolate Places as dead Men, all roaring like Beasts, and mourning like Doves, whenever the Apprehension of the Terror of God entereth. Now it is subjoined, *Ver.* 16. *And he saw that there was no Man*, &c. As if he had waited and looked through all the World, if any would appear, either to speak or do for Man, if any would offer themselves, and interpose themselves for his Salvation. *Therefore his own Arm brought Salvation, and his Righteousness it sustained him.* Therefore, the Son of God steps in and offers himself, as if God had first assayed all others, and when Heaven is full of Wonder and Silence, he breaks out in this, *Lo, I come to do thy Will*, Psal. xl. Since I have gotten a Body to be like Sinners, I will also come in their Place, and I will give my Life a Ransom for them; and therefore it is subjoined, *The Redeemer shall come to Zion*; he shall come cloathed with Vengeance and Indignation as a Garment, against the Enemies of his Church, Sin and Satan, in Zeal

Zeal and burning Love to his designed Spouse; he shall strengthen himself, and stir up his Might and Fury against all that detain her Captive.

Now indeed, he is the only fittest Person for this Business in Heaven or Earth, for he hath both Right to do it, and he hath only Might and Power to accomplish it. He hath Right to the Redemption of Sinners, because he is our Kinsman, neareſt of Blood to us. Now, you know the Right of Redemption belonged to the Kinsman, *Lev.* xxv. 25.

And therefore, when the neareſt Kinsman could not redeem *Naomi* and *Ruth*'s Parcel of Land, *Booz* he did it, as being next: And suitable to this, our Lord Jesus, when others as near could not, and were not able: He hath done it, and taken Men and Angels to witness, that he hath first redeemed us, that he might marry us, as *Eph.* v. That he hath purchased us to be his Wife; and indeed the very Word imports this. *Goel*, a Redeemer and Kinsman, passing under one Word: So *Job*, *I know that my Redeemer, or my Kinsman liveth.* And because our Kinsman, therefore most interested in our Redemption; for, *for this End he became Partaker of Flesh and Blood with the Children, that he might destroy our greatest Enemy Satan, and redeem us*, Heb. ii. 14. And besides, he hath Right to Redemption, as the Churches Husband, because he must mediate between her and all others; none can reach her, except he please, or prosecute a Plea against her, as in the Case of the Wife's making a Vow; if her Husband consented not, it was void, *Num.* xxx. but if he heard of it and held his Peace, it was confirmed. Now, the Lord Jesus hath known this deplorable Estate we are Captives into; and he hath testified his utter Dislike of our binding over ourselves to Death, and resigning ourselves to Satan; and therefore this Bondage, in which we are detained, is not confirmed and ratified, but he hath Right remaining to redeem us from the Hand of all our Enemies. But then, he alone hath Might and Power to do it, for God hath laid Help on him, and made him able and mighty to save us to the uttermost. It was not Gold or Silver, or corruptible Things: Suppose the whole Earth were turned into Gold or precious Stones; he must give Person for Person, and one Person equivalent to all, his own Life, his own Blood for us; and the Value of this was infinitely raised by the Stamp of his Divinity put upon it: The King for the Servant, one that knew no Sin for Sinners, yea God for Man; this superadds infinite Worth, and makes it an Over-ransom, and Over-purchase, a Ransom to buy our Persons from Hell, a Purchase to redeem us to our Inheritance, Heaven that we had lost, and these two Stiles it gets, ἀντὶ ἀντίλυτρον.

Now, you see the great Difficulty is overcome and taken out of the Way, Christ, being made a Curse, hath purchased a Redemption from the Curse of the Law, *Gal.* iv. 13. But yet, there is another Point of vast Distance, I may say, Contrariety and Enmity between us and him; he is holy and undefiled, all fair, and no Spot in him; we are wholly defiled and depraved by Sin, our Souls are become the Habitation of Devils, and a Cage of every unclean and hateful Bird; In a Word, he hath not only our Enemies to overcome, but our own Hearts to conquer, and our Enmity to take away. This makes the wideſt Separation

tion from him. Now, he filled up much of the Distance, with his taking our Flesh, and he removed the great Difficulty, by dying in our Flesh, his Humiliation to be a Man brought him nearer us: And his further Humiliation, to be a dying, crucified and buried Man, brought him yet a Step nearer us. But nearer he cannot come, for lower he cannot be, except he were a Sinner, which would mar the whole Design, and take away all the Comfort of his Likeness to us; therefore, since he hath come so low down to us, it is suitable we be raised up one Step to meet him; and so the Exaltation of Sinners shall make up all the Distance, and bring the two Parties to that long since designed, and long desired Meeting. Now, for this End and Purpose, the Son undertakes the Redemption of his Church, from Sin and Ungodliness as well as Wrath; and therefore you have that, which is expressed as the Character of the Redeemed in this *Ver.* It is exponed as the great Point or Part of the Redemption itself, by the Apostle, *Rom.* xi. *The Redeemer shall come to Sion, to turn all Ungodliness from Jacob.* And so his End was not only to be Partaker of our Nature, but to make us Partakers of the divine Nature; and therefore the Father out of his Love to this Business, he promised to send his Spirit to dwell in our Hearts, to make the Word sound in our Mouths and Ears, and the Spirit to work in our Hearts, and this Exaltation of Sinners to the Participation of the Holy Spirit, together with Christ's Humiliation, to partake of our Flesh, makes up the full Distance, and bringeth Christ and his Church to that holy patient Impatience, and Longing for the Day when it shall be solemnized in Heaven. *The Spirit within us, says come, and the Bride says come; even so come Lord Jesus.* And he waits for nothing, but the compleating and adorning of all the rest, that there may be one Jubilee for all and for ever. Now, I wish we could understand the absolute and free Tenor of God's Covenant: There is much Controversy speculative about the Condition of the Covenant, about the Promises, whether absolute or conditional; and there is too much practical Debate in perplexed Consciences about this, how to find something in themselves to fit and fashion them for the Redemption. But truly, if we would not disjoin and dismember the Truth of God, but take it all intirely as one great Design of Love and Mercy revealed to Sinners, and so conjoin the Promises of the Covenant into one Bundle, we would certainly find that it hath the Voice of *Jacob*, tho' it seem to have the Hand of *Esau*; we find an absolute, most free and unconditioned Sense, when there is a conditional Strain and Shadow of Words in some Places. The Truth is, the turning of Souls from Ungodliness, is not properly a Condition exacted from us, as a Promise to be performed in us, and the chiefest Part of Christ's Redemption: And tho' some abuse the Grace of God, and turn it into Wantonness and Liberty; yet certainly, this Doctrine that makes the greatest Part of the glad News of the Gospel to be Redemption from Sin, and the pouring out of the Spirit, is the greatest Perswasive to a godly Conversation, and the most deadly Enemy to all Ungodliness.

I thought to have spoken more of that third Thing I proponed, but take it in a Word. This was always proponed to the Church as the strongest Cordial, it

was given here as the greateſt Conſolation in all their long Captivity, that this Redeemer was afterwards to come, whoſe Virtue was then living, and preſent to the quickning and comforting of Souls. It was thought enough to uphold in a moſt deſperate Strait. *To us a Child is born*, Iſa. viii. I wiſh we could take it ſo: Certainly it was the Character of a Believer before Chriſt's coming, that he was one that was looking and waiting for the Salvation of *Iſrael*, by this Redeemer. But now we are ſurrounded with Conſolation before and behind, Chriſt already come, ſo that we may in Joy ſay, Lo this is our God, we have waited for him: Others waited and longed, and we ſee him; and Chriſt ſhortly to come again without Sin, to our Salvation. And what could be able to take our Joy from us, if we had one Eye always back to his firſt Coming, and another always forward to his coming again?

SERMON XV.

Iſa. lxiv. 6, 7. *But we are all as an unclean Thing, and all our Righteouſneſs as filthy Rags*, &c.

THIS Peoples Condition agreeth well with ours, tho' the Lord's Dealing be very different. The confeſſory Part of this Prayer belongeth to us now; and ſtrange it is, that there is ſuch Odds of the Lord's Diſpenſations, when there is no Difference in our Conditions; always, we know not how ſoon the Complaint may be ours alſo. This Prayer was prayed long before the Judgment and Captivity came on, ſo that it had a Propheſy in the Boſom of it: Nay, it was the moſt kindly and affectionate Way of Warning the People could get, for *Iſaiah* to pour forth ſuch a Prayer, as if he beheld with his Eyes the Calamity, as already come: And indeed it becometh us ſo to look on the Word, as if it gave a preſent Being to Things as certain and ſenſible, as if they were really. What ſtrange Stupidity muſt be in us, when preſent Things, inflicted Judgments, committed Sins, do not ſo much affect us, as the Foreſight of them did move *Iſaiah*. Always, as this was regiſtrate for the Peoples Uſe, to cauſe them ſtill look on Judgments threatned, as performed and preſent, and anticipate the Day of Affliction by Repentance; and alſo to be a Pattern to them, how to deal with God, and plead with him from ſuch Grounds of Mercy and Covenant-Intereſt: So it may be to us a Warning, eſpecially when Sin is come to the Maturity, and our ſecure backſliding Condition is with Child of ſad Judgments, when the Harveſt ſeemeth ripe to put the Sickle in to it.

There is in theſe two *Verſes*, a Confeſſion

feſſion of their own Sinfulneſs, from which Grounds they juſtify God's proceeding with them; they take the Cauſe upon themſelves, and juſtify him in his Judging, whether temporal or ſpiritual Plagues were inflicted. In this *Verſe*, they take a general Survey of their ſinful Eſtate, concluding themſelves unclean, and all their Performances and commanded Duties, which they counted once their Righteouſneſs: And from this Ground, they clear God's dealing with them, and put their Mouths in the Duſt; and ſo from the Lord's Judgment they are forced to enter into a Search of the Cauſe, ſo much Sin, and from diſcovered Sin, they pronounce God righteous in his Judgment: Perceiving a great Difference in the Lord's Manner of dealing with them and their Fathers, they do not refound it upon God who is righteous in all his Ways, but retort it upon themſelves, and find a vaſt Diſcrepance between themſelves and their Fathers, *Ver.* 5. And ſo it was no Wonder that God's Diſpenſation changed upon them; God was wont to meet others, to ſhew himſelf gracious, even to prevent Strokes: But now he was wroth with them; nay, but there is good Cauſe for it, *They rejoice and wrought Righteouſneſs*, but we have ſinned. And this may be ſaid in the general, never one needeth to quarrel God for ſevere dealing: If he deal worſe with one than with another, let every Man look into his own Boſom, and ſee Reaſon ſufficient; yea more Provocation in themſelves than others. Always, in this *Verſe*, they come to a more diſtinct View of their loathſome Condition. Any Body may wrap up their Repentance in a general Notion of Sin, but they declare themſelves to be more touched with it, and condeſcend on Particulars, yet ſuch Particulars as comprehend many others. And in this Confeſſion, you may look on the Spirit's Work, having ſome Characters of the Spirit in it. *Firſt*, They take a general View of their Uncleanneſs and loathſome Eſtate by Sin; not only do they ſee Sin, but Sin in the Sinfulneſs of it and Uncleanneſs of it. *Secondly*, They not only conclude ſo of the natural Eſtate they were born into, and the Loathſomneſs of their many foul Scandals among them: But they go a further Length, to paſs as ſevere a Sentence on their Duties and Ordinances, as God hath done, *Iſa.* i. and lxvi. The Spirit convinceth according to Scripture Light, and not according to the dark Spark of Nature's Light; and ſo that which Nature would have busked itſelf with as its Ornament, that which they had covered themſelves with as their Garment, had ſpread their Duties as Robs of Righteouſneſs over their Sins to hide them; all this now goeth under the Name of Filthineſs and Sin. They ſee themſelves wrapt up in as vile Rags as they covered and hid; commanded Duties and manifeſt Breaches come in one Category: And not only is it ſome of them which their own Conſcience could challenge in the Time, but all of them and all Kinds of them, moral and ceremonial, Duties that were moſt ſincere, had moſt Affection in them, all of them are filthy Rags now, which but of late were their Righteouſneſs. *Thirdly*, There is an Univerſality, not only of the Actions, but of Perſons; not only all the Peoples or Multitudes Performances are Abomination, but all of them, *Iſaiah*, and one and other, the holieſt of them come in, in this Category and Rank: *We are all unclean*, &c. Tho' the People, it may be, could not

join holy *Isaiah* with themselves, yet humble *Isaiah* will join himself with the People, and come in, in one Prayer: And no doubt, he was as sensible of Sin now, as when he began to prophecy; and growing in Holiness, he must grow also in Sense of Sinfulness: Seeing at the first Sight of God's Holiness and Glory, he cried *unclean*, &c. *Isa.* vi. 5. certainly he doth so now, from such a Principle of Access to God's Holiness, which maketh him abhor himself in Dust and Ashes. *Fourthly*, They are not content with such a general, but condescend to two special Things, two spiritual Sins, to wit, Omission, or shifting of spiritual Duties, which contained the Substance of Worship: *None calleth on thee*, few or none, none to count upon calleth on thee; that is, careth for immediate Access and approaching unto God in Prayer and Meditation, *&c.* Albeit external and Temple-duties be frequent, yet who prayeth in Secret; or if any pray, that cannot come in Count, the Lord knoweth them not, because they want the Spirit's Stamp on them. This must become other Thing nor the general Conviction of Sin which the World hath, who think they pray all their Days; here People, who tho' they make many Prayers, *Isa.* i. yet they see them no Prayers, and no calling on God's Name now. But *Fifthly*, To make the Challenge the more, and the Confession more spiritual and complete, there is discovered to them this Ground of their Slackness and Negligence in all spiritual Duties, *None stirreth up himself to take hold on thee.* Here is the Want of the Exercise of Faith: Faith is the Soul's Hand and Grip, *John* i. 12. *Heb.* vi. 18. 1 *Tim.* vi. 12. *Isa.* xxvii. 5. No Body awaketh themselves out of their Deadness and Security, to lay hold on thee: Lord thou art going away, and taking Good-night of the Land, and no Body is like to hold thee by the Garment: *No Jacobs here, who will not let thee go, till thou bless them*; none to prevail with thy Majesty, every one is like to give Christ a free Pasport and Testimonial to go abroad, and are almost *Gadarens*, to pray him to depart out of their Coasts. There is a strange Lousness and Indifferency in Mens Spirits concerning the one Thing necessary: Men ly by and dream over their Days, and never put the Soul's Estate out of Question; none will give so much Pains, as to clear their Interest in thee, to lay hold on thee, so as they may make Peace with thee. Now, can there be a more ample and lively Description of our Estate, both of the Land and of particular Persons of it. Since this must not be limited to the Nation of the *Jews*, tho' the Prophet spake of the Generality of them; yet no doubt, all Mankind is included in the first six *Verses*; and any secure People may be included in the seventh *Verse*, for *Paul* applyeth even such like Speeches (*Rom.* xiii.) that were spoken, as you would think, of *David*'s Enemies only; yet the Spirit of God knowing the Mind of the Spirit, maketh a more general Use of their Condition, to hold out the natural Estate of all Men out of Christ Jesus.

But there are in these two *Verses*, other two Things, beside the Acknowledgement of Sin; *First*, The Acknowledgement of God's Righteousness in punishing them, for now they need not quarrel God, they find the Cause of their fading in their own Bosom: They now join Sin and Punishment together, whereas in the Time of their Prosperity, they separated

rated Punishment from Sin; and in the Time of their Security in Adversity, they separated Sin from Punishment; at one Time making bare Confession of Sin, without Fear of God's Justice, at another Time freting and murmuring at his Judgments, without the Sense of their Sin: But now they join both these, and the Sight and Sense of God's Displeasure maketh Sin more bitter, and to abound more, and to appear in the loathsome and provoking Nature of it, so that their Acknowledgement hath an Edge upon it. And again, the Sight and Sense of Sin maketh the Judgment appear most righteous, and stoppeth their Mouth from murmuring. In the Time of their Impenitency under the Rod, their Language was very indifferent, *Ezek.* xviii. 2. *The Fathers have eaten sour Grapes, and the Childrens Teeth are set on edge*; they have sinned and we suffer, they have done the Wrong and we pay for it: But it is not so now, *Ver.* 5. The Fathers have done Righteousness in respect of us, and thou was good unto them, but we are all unclean, and have sinned, and so we are punished. *Secondly*, They find some Cause and Ground in God of their general Defection, not that he is the Cause of their Sin, but in a righteous Way he punished Sin with Sin. God hid his Face, denied special Grace and Influence; and so they ly still in their Security and their Sin became a spiritual Plague. Or this may be so read, none calleth on thy Name, when thou hid thy Face from us, and when thou consumed us because of our Iniquities; and so it serveth to aggravate their deep Security, that tho' the Lord was departing from them, yet none would keep him and hold him; tho' he did strike, yet they prayed not, Affliction did not awake them out of Security, and so the last Words, *Thou hast consumed us*, &c. are differently exponed and read; some make it thus, as it is in the Translation, *Thou hast hid thy Face, and left us in a spiritual Deadness*, that so there might be no Impediment to bring on deserved Judgment: If we had called on thee, and laid hold on thee, it might have been prevented, we might have prevailed with God, but now our Defence is removed, and thou hast given us up to a Spirit of Slumber, and so we have no Shield to hold off the Stroke, thou hast now good Leave to consume us for our Sins. Another Sense may be (thou hast suffered us to consume in our Iniquity, thou hast given us up to the Hand of our Sins:) And this is also a Consequent of his hiding his Face; because thou hid thy Face, thou letteth us perish in our Sins; there needeth no more for our Consumption, but only help us not out of them, for we can soon destroy ourselves.

First, Sin is in its own Nature Loathsome, and maketh one unclean before God: Sin's Nature is Filthiness, Vileness, so doth *Isaiah* speak of himself, *Chap.* vi. 5. when he saw God's Holiness; so doth *Job* abhor himself, which is the Affection which turneth a Man's Face off a loathsome Object, when he saw God, *Job* xl. 4. and xlii. 6. Look how loathsome our natural Condition is holden out by God himself, *Ezek.* xvi. You cannot imagine any Deformity in the Creature, any Filthiness, but it is there. The Filthiness and Vileness of Sin shall appear, if we consider first: Sin is a Transgression of the holy and spiritual Command, and so a vile Thing; *The Command is holy and good*, Rom. vii.

And

And ſin violateth and goeth flat contrary to the Command, 1 *John* iii. When ſo juſt and ſo equitable a Law is given, God might have exacted other rigorous Duties from us, but when it is ſo framed, that the Conſcience muſt cry out, all is Equity, all is righteous, and more than righteous, thou might command more, and reward none; it is Juſtice to command, but it is Mercy to promiſe Life to Obedience, which I owe: What then muſt the Offence be, againſt ſuch a juſt Command, and ſo holy. If Holineſs be the Beauty of the Creation, Sin muſt be the Deformity of it, the only Spot in its Face.

Secondly, Look upon Sin in the Sight of God's Holineſs and infinite Majeſty, and O! how hainous will it appear; and therefore no Man hath ſeen Sin in the Vileneſs of it, but in the Light of God's Countenance, as *Iſa.* vi. 5, *Job* xl. and xlii. *God is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, he cannot look on it, *Hab.* i. 13. All other Things beſide Sin, God looketh on them as bearing ſome Mark of his own Image, *All was very good, and God ſaw it*, Gen. i. and ii. Even the baſeſt Creatures God looketh on them, and ſeeth himſelf in them; but Sin is only God's Eye-ſore, that his Holineſs cannot away with, it is moſt contrary unto him; and as to his Soveraignty, it is an high Contempt and Rebellion done to God's Majeſty; it putteth God off the Throne, will take no Law from him, will not acknowledge his Law, but (as it were) ſpitteth in his Face, and eſtabliſheth another God. There is no Puniſhment ſo evil, that God will not own as his Work, and declare himſelf to be the Author of it, but only Sin; his Soul abhoreth it, his holy Will is againſt it, he will have no Fellowſhip with it; it is ſo contrary to him, contradicteth his Will, debaſeth his Authority, deſpiſeth his Sovereignty, vilipendeth his Truth. There is a Kind of Infiniteneſs in it; nothing can expreſs it but itſelf, no Name worſe than itſelf to ſet it out; the Apoſtle can get no other Epithet to it, *Rom.* xvii. 13. *Sinful Sin*; ſo that it cometh in moſt direct Oppoſition unto God. All that is in God, is God himſelf, and there is no Name can expreſs him ſufficiently; if you ſay *God*, you ſay more than can be expreſt by many thouſand other Words; ſo it is here, Sin is purely Sin, God is purely good and holy, without Mixture, Holineſs itſelf; Sin is ſimply evil, without Mixture, Unholineſs iſelf; whatever is in it, is Sin, is Uncleanneſs; Sin is an infinite Wrong, and an infinite and boundleſs Filthineſs, becauſe of the infinite Perſon wronged, it is an Offence of infinite Majeſty, and the Perſon wronged aggravateth the Offence; if it be ſimply contrary to infinite Holineſs, it muſt be in that Reſpect, infinite Unholineſs and Uncleanneſs.

Thirdly, Look upon the ſad Effects and Conſequences of Sin, how miſerable, how ruinous it hath made Man, and all the Creation, and how vile muſt it be? *Firſt*, Look on Man's native Beauty and Excellency, how beautiful a Creature? But Sin hath caſt him down from the Top of his Excellency; Sin made *Adam* of a Friend an Enemy, of a Courtier with God an open Rebel. Was not Man's Soul of more Price nor all the World, ſo that nothing can exchange it? Yet hath Sin debaſed it, and proſtitute it, to all vile filthy Pleaſures; hath made the immortal Spirit dwell on the Dunghill, feed on Aſhes, catch Vanities, lying Vanities, pour out itſelf to them, ſerve all the Creatures; whereas it ſhould have made

made them Servants, yea a Slave to his own greatest Enemy, to the Ground he treadeth upon. O! what a degenerate Plant; it was a noble Vine once in Paradise, but Sin hath made it a wild one, to bring forth sour Grapes. What is there in all the World could defile a Man? *Mat.* xv. 20. *Nothing that goeth out or cometh in, but Sin that proceeded out of the Heart.* Man was all Light, his Judgment shined into his Affections, and thro' all the Man; but Sin hath made all Darkness, closed up the poor captive Understanding, hath built up a thick Wall of gross corrupted Affections about it, so that Light can neither get in nor out. The Soul was like a clear running Fountain, which yielded fresh clear Streams of holy Inclinations, Desires, Affections, Actions, and emptied itself in the Sea of immense Majesty, from which these Streams first flowed; but now it is a standing putrified Puddle, that casteth a vile Stink round about, and hath no Issue towards God. Man was a glorious Creature, fit to be Lord over the Work of God's own Hands, and therefore had God's Image in a special Manner, Holiness and Righteousness, God's Nature; a Piece of Divinity was stamped on Man, which outshined all created Perfections; the Sun might blush when it looked on him, for what was material Glory to the Glory of Holiness, and Beauty of God's Image? But Sin hath robbed poor Man of this glorious Image, hath defaced Man, marred all his Glory, put on an hellish Likeness on him; Holiness only putteth the Difference between Angels in Heaven and Devils in Hell; and Sin only hath made the Difference between *Adam* in Paradise, and Sinners on the curled Gronnd, *Rom.* iii. 23.

Secondly, Sin hath so redounded thro' Man unto all the Creation, that it hath defiled it, and made it corruptible and subject to Vanity, *Rom.* viii. 20, *&c.* So that this is a Spot in all the Creatures Face, that Man hath sinned, and used all as Weapons of Unrighteousness, so that now the Creature groaneth to be delivered.

Thirdly, It hath brought on all the Misery that is come on Man, or that is to come; it hath brought on Death and Damnation as its Wages, and the Curse of the eternal God, *Gal.* iii. 13. *Rom.* vi. 23. How odious then an Evil must it be, that hath so much Evil in it, yea all Evil in the Bosom of it: Hell is not evil in respect of Sin, for Sin deserveth Hell; it hath ruined Man, and made all the beautiful Order of the Creation to change.

Fourthly, It separateth Man from God, which is worst of all; and this is included in the Text, *We are all as an unclean Thing, or Man*, as a leprous Man set apart, because of Pollution, that may not come to the Temple, or worship God, so hath Iniquity separated between God and us, *Isa.* lix. 2. And O! how sad a Divorcement is this, it maketh Men *without God in the World, in whom we live and move and have our Being; in whose Favour is Life, and at whose right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.* Now poor Man is made miserable, deprived of his Felicity, which only consisted in Enjoyment of God: Sin as a thick Partition-wall is come in between, Enmity also is come in, and divideth old Friends, *Eph.* ii. 14, 15, 16, 17. And now no heavenly or comfortable Influence can break thorough; the Night of Darkness is begun, which must

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prove everlasting, except the Partition-wall be removed, all must wither and decay as without the Sun.

Fifthly, Look on the Price paid for Sin, on the cleansing that washeth it away, and you may see unspeakable Deformity and Vileness in it: The Redemption of the Soul is precious, Silver and Gold and precious Stones will not do it, that would be utterly contemned: What (saith God) presumptuous Sinner, will thou give a Farthing in Payment of a Sum, which all the World sold at the dearest would not discharge. *Psal.* xlix. 7, 8. 1 Pet. i. 18. *It is no corruptible Thing, but the Blood of the Son of God.* O! what must the Debt be, when the Price is so infinite? The Son of God must die; nay, *It is not Sacrifice or Offering, lo, I come to do thy Will*; it is Christ himself that is the Ransom, *Psal.* xl. 6, 7. And it is not much Sope or Nitre, it is not much Repentance and Tears that will wash away this Filthiness; no, it is of a deeper Die, *It is Crimson ingrained Filthiness*, Jer. ii. 22. And *Isa.* i. 6. *Blood of Bulls and Goats cannot do it, but only the Blood of the immaculate Lamb offered up by himself*, Heb. x. 4, 5. *The Blood of him, who by the eternal Spirit offered up himself without Spot unto God*, Heb. ix. 14. What must Sin be, that must have such a Fountain opened for it? It must be strange Uncleanness, when the Blood of Christ only can cleanse it, *Zech.* xiii. 1.

We all, &c. Mark, *Secondly*, Sin hath gone over us all, and made all Mankind unclean, *Rom.* iii. 22. and 10. Every one of *Adam*'s Posterity is born unclean, *For who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean*, Job. xiv. 4. Consider first, How Sin defaced innocent *Adam*, how one Sin made him so vile, and spoiled him of the divine Nature; and so the Root was made unclean, and the Branches must follow the Root, and so are we all born and conceived in Sin, *Psal.* li. 5. We carry in us original Corruption, flowing from the first actual Sin of *Adam*, and this maketh poor Children before they do Good or Evil, to be abominably vile in God's Sight, even as the Child is set out, *Ezek.* xvi. Every one cometh of evil Parents, all come of *Adam* the Rebel; what a loathsome Sight would a Child be to us so described, *Cast out in the open Field, to the Loathing of its Person in the Day it is born*; and what must it all be before *God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Sin? Secondly*, Unto all this we have added innumerable actual Transgressions, as so many filthy Streams flowing out at the Members, from the inward Puddle of original Corruption; and so how much more vile are we all nor Infants can be, or *Adam* was in the Day he was cast out of Paradise? And thus, *Rom.* iii. from *Ver.* 10. are the Branches set down, in Word, Thought and Deed; so that all the Inclinations and Motions and Actions of the Man are only evil continually. Every Man shall find his Count past counting; one Day's Faults would weary you, but what will your whole Life do? Known Sins are innumerable, what must unknown be? Every Man's Heart is like the troubled Sea, that casteth up Mire and Dirt daily, and cannot be at Rest. The Heart is daily flowing and ebbing in this Corruption, it cometh out daily to the Borders of all the Members; and there are some high spring Tides, when Sin aboundeth more. When in one Member of the Tongue a World of Evil is, what can be

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in all the Members? And what in the Soul, that is more capable than all the World? Well then, every Man hath ſinned in *Adam*, and hath ſinned alſo in his own Perſon, and ſealed *Adam*'s firſt Rebellion, by ſo many thouſand Actions like it: Every Man hath approven the Sin that firſt ruined Man, and made himſelf much more loathſome nor *Adam* was; therefore all Mankind may ſay, *We all are as an unclean Thing*. Now from all this, we would gladly diſcover unto you what your Condition is by Sin; if the Lord would ſhine, how vile would you be? Always we muſt declare this unto you in the Lord's Name, you are all unclean, not only born in Sin and Iniquity, not only have you a Body of Death within you, that hath all the Members; but all theſe Members have one Time or other acted and brought forth Fruit unto Death: How vile then muſt you be in God's Sight? It is a ſtrange Love that you have to yourſelves, that you cannot apprehend how God can hate you? But if he find Sin in you, wonder rather how he can look upon you; we would then have you to know this, that there can be no Fellowſhip between God and you in your natural Eſtate: As Men cannot inhabit a vile Perſon's Houſe, no more can God enter in your Souls. There is an abſolute Neceſſity of waſhing, before you can be his Houſe and Temple. Hath that one Sin of *Adam* made that glorious Perſon ſo deformed, that he could not look on himſelf, but cover himſelf? And hath it been of ſo defiling a Nature, that it hath redounded in all the Poſterity; and as unclean Things under the Law defiled all they touched, ſo hath that Sin ſubjected all the Creatures to Corruption? O! then imagine what an unſpeakable Defilement muſt be on us all, who are not only guilty of *Adam*'s Sin, but of many Thouſands beſide. If one Sin have no much Loathſomneſs in it, what muſt ſo many out of Number, united in one Perſon, even as in us all? *No unclean Thing can enter in Heaven above*: Know this for a Truth, you cannot ſee God's Face in the Caſe you are born into. You know nothing of Sin, who wonder that any ſhould go to Hell. No, if you knew any Thing of Sin, you would wonder that ever God ſhould look on ſuch caſt out in the open Field, in their Blood.

Next, You muſt know the Inſufficiency of all Things imaginable, to waſh away Sin's Filthineſs, except the Blood of Chriſt. Since you are unclean, do you not ask, how ſhall we be waſhed? Indeed many have an eaſy Anſwer, and paſs it lightly. The Multitude know no Way to cleanſe in, but the Tears of Repentance and Mourning; and ſo, many think themſelves clean, when they run and pour out a Tear as *Eſau* did for the Bleſſing. But what ſaith the Lord? *Tho' thou waſh thee with Nitre, and take thee much Sope, yet thine Iniquity is marked.* Can ſuch an ingrained Uncleanneſs, can ſuch an infinite Spot in the immortal Soul, be ſo lightly daſhed out? Many think Baptiſm cleanſeth them, but was not this People circumciſed, as ye are baptized? And *Peter* tells us, it is not the waſhing of Water, 1 *Pet.* iii. 21. Sacrifice and Offering will not do it: This People thought, ſure they had ſatisfied God, when they brought a Lamb, *&c.* but all this is Abomination. Would not many of you think yourſelves cleanſed from Sin, if you offered all your Subſtance, and the Fruit of your Body for the Sin of your Soul? Nay, but you muſt ſee an abſolute Neceſſity of the

opened Fountain of Chriſt's Blood, that cleanſeth from all Sin.

Then we would have you abhore yourſelves in Duſt and Aſhes, ſee nothing in all the Creation ſo vile as you; look on Sin in the Sight of God's Face, and how unholy will it appear? There are many Sins, little ones, that in our Practice paſs for venial and uncontrolled: But look on the filthy loathſome Nature of all Sin, and hate the leaſt Offence, for it hath a Kind of Infiniteneſs in it, and blotteth the Soul, defileth the Perſon. How great a Neceſſity is there of continual Application to the Fountain, of dwelling beſide it, that you may waſh daily. *David*'s ſo often repeated, and inculcated Prayer, *Waſh me, cleanſe me*, &c. *Pſal.* li. declareth that he hath apprehended much Uncleanneſs in Sin, that it needeth ſo many Applications of the precious Blood. And you who have come to Jeſus, and are clean, O how much owe you to free Grace, that paſt by you in your Blood, and ſaid, *Live, it is a Time of Love*. How ſtrange is it, that glorious Majeſty cometh to own Deformity, and cometh to cloath it with his own Garments? Praiſe the Virtue of that Blood, that is more precious nor the Blood of Bulls and Goats, that can ſo throughly purge, as you ſhall have no more Conſcience of Sin.

Unclean Sinners waſh you, make you clean, there is a Fountain opened; tho' Sin were as Scarlet, it can perfectly change the Colour of it. If you waſh not while the Fountain is open, it will quickly be ſealed on you, and then it ſhall be ſaid, when the *Angel ſweareth by him that liveth for ever, that Time ſhall be no more*; then ſhall it be ſaid, *let him that is unclean, be unclean ſtill*. Now, Cleanſing is offered in the Goſpel, if you will love your Loathſomneſs ſo well, as not to dip yourſelves in this Fountain, then let the unclean be ſo ſtill: Your Repentance will never change your Colour, tho' you ſhould melt in Sorrow; and therefore you who have found a Way to be ſaved otherwiſe nor by Jeſus Chriſt, you ſhall be deceived; your Tears and Mourning that you might have had, tho' Chriſt had never come in the World, is all you uſe to ſpeak of, and build your Hope on: And if you ſpeak of Chriſt, it is in ſuch Terms as to buy him by ſuch Repentance; ſo that the Truth is, you uſe but Chriſt's Name as a Shadow, you make no Uſe of him: He needed not to have come in the World, for many of you could have done as well without him. But as many of you as cannot find Cleanſing, who ſee Filth increaſe, by Waſhing, come to Chriſt Jeſus, and ſay, *If thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean*, Mat. viii. 2. Nothing beſide Jeſus can do it, believe his Sufficiency; nothing beſide him will do, believe his Willingneſs; for, for this Cauſe he is an opened Fountain that all may come and draw.

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SERMON XVI.

Isa. lxiv. 6, 7. ——*All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags, and we all do fade as a Leaf, and our Iniquities, like the Wind, have taken us away.*

NOT only are the direct Breaches of the Command Uncleanness, and Men originally and actually unclean, but even our holy Actions, our commanded Duties: Take a Man's Civility, Religion, and all his universal inherent Righteousness, all are filthy Rags. And here the Church confesseth nothing, but what God accuseth her of, *Isa.* lxvi. 3. and *Chap.* i. *Ver.* 11, 12, 13. *&c.* This People was much in ceremonial and external Duties; and therefore they cryed, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord,* as if this would have outcryed all their other Sins; therefore were they proud, and Lords in their own Estimation and innocent, *Jer.* ii. 31, 35. They thought the many good Services they did to God, might compense all their Wrongs, *Mic.* vi. 6, 7. They gave a Price to Justice for their Sins, even a Confession of it by offering a Lamb, *&c.* and a Purpose to amend. But lo, what Sense the Prophet hath of all this, *Lord all our Righteousness is* filthy likewise; albeit we have paid the Debt of Sins with Duties, yet now we see all these are Sins themselves, and must have another Sacrifice; so that all Matter of Boasting is now removed, and we are stript naked of all Righteousness: We covered our Filthiness before with Duties, now both the one and the other is filthy. We would look upon two Sorts of Righteousness, the natural Man's and the converted Man's, upon the one's Civility and fair Profession, and upon the other's real or true Grace in discharge of Duties; and we shall find good Reason to conclude both the one and the other under Filthiness, so that there is no Ground of Boasting, no inherent Righteousness can make us accepted before God.

First then, whatever Men can do from natural Principles, all the Flower and Perfection of Mens Actions, both civil and religious, is but abominable before God, as long as their Persons are unjustified. Every Performance is defiled by the Uncleanness of the Person; and therefore *God heareth not Sinners,* John viii. that is, unjustified Sinners; tho' they pray much, yet God heareth them not. And this is lively expressed by *Hag.* ii. 12, 13, 14. As the Priest's holy Garments and Flesh could not make Bread or Pottage holy, but the unclean Body could make these unclean; so this Nations and

Peoples Performances and holy Duties, could not make them holy, and their Persons clean; but their unclean Persons and Actions made all their Performances unclean: The solemn Meeting and Sacrifice, &c. could not make them accepted, but their unclean Persons made their solemn Meetings and religious Duties vile and abominable in God's Sight: And thus, *to the unclean all Things are unclean, even their Mind and Conscience*, Tit. i. 15. The unbelieving Man, who is born unclean, and defiled with so much original Corruption, and so many actual Transgressions, defileth all Things he toucheth; as a dead Body, or a leprous Garment under the Law, made all unclean it touched, and nothing could make it holy by touching of it: So all your Civility, all your Profession will never contribute to the Cleansing of your Person; and your Persons shall defile all your most clean Actions. God loveth not that Stock of *Adam*, and all that groweth on it must be hateful; he is only well pleased in Jesus Christ, and with those who are transplanted out of rotten *Adam*, into the true Vine Jesus, it is such Fruit only that can be acceptable; therefore, until you be sprinkled with clean Water, and made clean according to the new Covenant way, you cannot please God. Believe this, your Sins and your Duties are one, your Oaths and your Prayers are in the same Account with God. What have you then to build upon, when all this is removed? You must once be stript naked of all Coverings; and will not your Nakedness then be great? The Pharisee went away unjustified, and the poor repenting Sinner justified. What was the Reason? There are not many of you have such a fair Venture for Heaven as he had, so many Prayers, Fastings, Alms, to ground your Hope on. Nay, but all this would never justify his Person, because once he was unclean, come of *Adam*, and had contracted more Uncleanness, and all that is like the leprous Garment, defiling all that cometh near it; so that whatever hath any Dependence on a Son of *Adam*, must contract Filthiness. Now, I ask your Consciences, have you so many specious Coverings to adorn yourself with? Is not your Outside spotted, and not so clean, as the young civil Man, and the religious Pharisee? Certainly, no; and yet you have no other Ground to plead the Acceptation of your Persons upon, but only this, your Prayers and Tears, or some such Duty performed by you. Well, all is Uncleanness, since your Persons were once unclean, no Sope nor Nitre can wash it, no holy Flesh make it holy, no good Wishes nor Duties can make it acceptable. Did not this People think of their Duties as much as you do? And had more Reason so to do; for our Congregations have not so much Form of Godliness as they had, and yet God solemnly protesteth to them, that all their Works were defiled, even these which they took to wash themselves with, so your Repentance and Tears must be as filthy as the Sin you would wash by it.

Secondly, The Uncleanness of Mens Practice maketh unclean Performances, *Unclean Hands make unclean Prayers*, Isa. i. 15. When Men go on in Sin, and use their Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness against God, and Guiltiness is above their Head unrepented of, and unpardoned, then whatever the Members act for God in religious Duties, it must be also abominable; for

for will God take Prayers from such a Mouth, that cursing cometh out of? *Isa.* iii. 10, 11, 12. Shall sweet Water come out of one Fountain with bitter? Or can a Fig-tree bear both Thistles and Graps? Certainly, profane Conversation must make unclean Profession; and therefore your coming to the Church and Ordinances, your praying in your Families, or such like, must of Necessity be defiled, since out of the same Mouth cometh cursing, railing, lying, filthy Speeches: Your Tongues are so often imployed in God's Dishonour, to blaspheme his Name, to slander your Neighbours, to reproach the Saints, that all your Prayers must be of the same Stamp, and as bitter as the other Stream of your Actions: When you stretch forth your Hands to make many Prayers, to take the Bread and Wine, shall not God hide his Face from such Hands, as are unclean with many Abominations, some murdering, some abusing their Neighbours, some Sabbath-breaking, some Filthiness? How oft have your Hands and Feet served you to evil Turns? and therefore, your good Turns will never come in Remembrance: Nay, believe it, you cannot be heard of God, while you cover any Offence. And this I may say in general, even to the Saints; any known Sin given Way to, and entertained without Controlment, without wrestling against it, hindereth the Acceptation of your solemn Approaches. *If your Heart regard Iniquity, shall God hear?* Psal. lxvi. 18. No, believe it, the least Sin that you may judge at first venial, and then give it Toleration and Indulgence, shall separate between God's Face and you: Your Prayers are Abomination, because of such an Idol perked up in the Heart beside God, that getteth the Honour and Worship due to him, and God must answer you according to it, *Ezek.* xix. 1, 3, 4. God will not be enquired of such as give Allowance to Sin, *Ezek.* xiv. 2, 3, 4. And on the other Hand, no Sin how great and hainous soever can hinder God's gracious Acceptance, when Souls fly unto Jesus and turn their Back upon Sin, or giveth it no Heart Allowance: And to the Multitude, I say, all that you do or touch in a Duty must be defiled, because your whole Way is unclean, *Hag.* ii. 12, 13, 14. Think you to sin all the Week thorough, and worship God on the Sabbath? Will you lie, swear, commit Adultery, rail and curse, and come and stand before me, saith the Lord? No certainly, you cannot be accepted; and will you hate Reformation in your Lives, and take his Covenant in your Mouth, and call yourselves by his Name, *Christians?* And shall not God challenge you for that, as much as for your swearing, and cursing, and lying, *&c.* Indeed the Lord putteth all in one Roll, and you need not please yourselves in such Things, *Psal.* l. 16. *Jer.* vii. 9, 10. For it is all one to you to go to Tavern to drink, and come to the Sermon, to blaspheme God's Name, and call on it, because the Profanity of the one defileth the other, and the Holiness of the other, cannot make you holy.

Thirdly, The natural Man's Performances want the Uprightness, Reality and Sincerity that is required; it is but a painted Tomb, full of Rottenness within; it is but a Shadow without Substance, for he wanteth the spiritual Part of Worship, which God careth for, *Who will be worshiped in Spirit and Truth*, John iv. 23. Now, what is it that the most Part of you can speak of, but an Outside of some

ſome few Duties, ſoon numbered. You hear the Preaching, and your Hearts wander about your Buſineſs: You hear, and are not ſo much affected, as you would be to hear ſome old Story, or Fable told you: A Stage-play acted before this Generation, would move them more than the Goſpel doth; ſo that Chriſt may take up this Lamentation, *We have piped to you, and you have not danced; lamented to you, and you have not mourned.* You uſe to tell over ſome Words in your Prayers, and are not ſo ſerious in any Approach to God, as in twenty other Things of the World. Whatever you plead of your Heart's Rightneſs, and have Recourſe to it, when your Converſation cannot defend you, yet your Hearts are the worſt of all, and have no Uprightneſs towards God; for you know that what Duties you go about, it is not from an inward Principle, but from Education or Cuſtom, or Conſtraint. Are you upright, when you are forced for fear of Cenſure to come here, or to pray at home? Is that Sincerity and ſpiritual Worſhip? And for the more poliſhed and refined Profeſſors, you have this Moth in your Performances, and this Flea to make your Ointment to ſtink, that you do much to be ſeen of Men; therefore what little Fervour of Spirit is in ſecret Duties, there you may meaſure your Altitude and your Life. And O how wearieſome, how lifeleſs are ſecret Approaches? You would not have many Errands to God, if you thought no Body looked upon you. And for Spirituality, it is a Myſtery in all Mens Practice: Who directeth his Duty to God's Glory? If you get ſome Flaſh of Liberty, you have your Deſire; but who miſſeth God's Preſence in Duties, which a World will approve? Who go mourning as without the Sun, even when you have the Sun ſhine of Ordinances, and walk in the Light of them?

And *Fourthly*, Tho' your Performances had Uprightneſs of Heart going alongs, and much Affection in them, yet all are filthy, becauſe of want of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt. When you make your Duties a Covering of your Sins, and think to ſatisfy God's Juſtice for the reſt of your Faults, by doing ſome Point of your Duty, then it cannot chooſe but be polluted in his Sight. And this very Thing was the Cauſe of God's rejecting the *Jews* Righteouſneſs, even becauſe they did not look to the End of the Myſtery, *Chriſt Jeſus*; did not pull by the Vail of Ceremonies, to ſee the immaculate Lamb of God ſlain for Sin; and therefore doth the Lord ſo quarrel with them, as if he had never commanded them to do ſuch Things, *Iſa.* i. 12, 13. *Who hath required theſe Things at your Hands? bring no more vain Oblations*, all is Abomination. Even as God ſhould ſay to you, when you come to the Church; Who required you to come? Who commanded you to come to hear the Preaching? What have you to do to pray? What Warrand have you to communicate? All your praying, hearing, communicating, is Abomination; Who commanded you to do theſe Things? Would you not think it a fooliſh Queſtion? You would ſoon anſwer, that God himſelf commanded you, and will he not let us do his Bidding. Indeed this People (no doubt) have ſaid ſo in their Heart, and wondred what it meant. Nay, but here is the Myſtery, you go about theſe commanded Duties not in a commanded Way, and ſo the Obedience is but Rebellion: You bring Offerings and Incenſe, and think that I am pacified when you

you bring Alms, you judge you have given me a Recompence; whereas, all that is mine, and what Pleasure have I in these Things? I never appointed you Sacrifices for this End, but to lead you in to the Knowledge of my Son, which is to be slain in the Fulness of Time, *and by one Offering to perfect all.* I commanded you to look on Jesus Christ slain, in the slain Lamb, and so to expect Remission and Salvation in him; but you never looked to more nor the Ceremony, and made that your Saviour and Mediator; and therefore it is all Abomination: When you slay a Lamb, and offer Incense, it is all one Thing, as to cut off a Dog's Neck, or kill a Man; so may the Lord say to this Generation, I command you to pray, to repent and mourn for Sin, to come and hear the Word; but withal you must deny all these, and count yourselves unprofitable Servants, you must singly cast your Soul's Burden on Christ Jesus. But now (saith the Lord) who commanded your Repentance? for when you sit down to pray, or come in publick to confess Sin before the Congregation, you think you are washen; when you have said, you have sinned, and if you come to the length of Tears and Sorrow, Oh then sure you are pardoned, tho' in the mean Time you have no Thought of Jesus Christ, and knoweth no Use of him. Therefore, saith the Lord, who commanded you to do these Things? You think you have satisfied for your Sin, when you pay a Penalty, but who requireth this? I will reckon with you for these, as well as the Sins you pray and mourn for, because you do not singly look to Christ Jesus. Now, if he had never come to the World, your Ground of Confidence would not fail you; for you might have prayed as much, mourned and confessed, and promised Amendment; and so you past by *the Son of God, in whom only the Father is well pleased.* Think then upon this, whatever you make your Righteousness, there needeth no other Thing to make it filthy, but to make it your Righteousness: Your Confidence in your good Heart to God, Prayer Day and Night, and such like, is the most loathsome Thing in God's Eyes; except you come to this, to count your Prayers, as God doth, among your Oaths, to count your solemn Duties, among profane scandalous Actions, as the Lord doth, *Isa.* i. and lxvi. 3. Then certainly, you do adorn yourselves with them, and cover your Nakedness of other Faults, with such Leaves as *Adam* did, but you shall be more discovered; your Garment is as filthy as that it hideth, even because you make that Use of it to hide your Sin, and cover it.

Next, The Lord's Children have no Ground of Boasting either, from their own Righteousness; the holiest Saint on Earth must abhor himself in Dust and Ashes, and holy *Isaiah* joineth himself in with a profane People: When he cometh to God to be justified, he cometh among the Ungodly, he bringeth no Righteousness with him, he cometh in among them that work not. Now, you shall find good Ground why it must be so. *First*, There are ordinarily many Blemishes in our holiest Actions, Spots on our cleanest Garments, often Formality eateth up the Life of Duties, and presenteth a Body without a Soul in it: You sit down to pray out of Custom, Morning and Evening; and if there were no more to prove it, this may suffice: When pray you but at such Times? You have an Ordinary, and goeth not by it,

it, no Advantage is taken of Providence, no Neceſſity conſtraineth when Occaſion offereth; and ſo it is like the World's appointed Hours. How great Deadneſs and Indiſpoſition creepeth in, ſo that it is the ordinary Complaint; yea, all Prayers filled with it, ſcarcely any Room for other Petitions, becauſe of the want of Frame for Prayer itſelf: The Word is heard as a Diſcourſe, and on whom hath it Operation to ſtir up Affections, either of Joy or of Trembling? Chriſtians, you come not to hear God ſpeak, and ſo you meet with empty Ordinances, God is not in them. How often do crooked and ſiniſter Ends creep in, and byaſs the Spirit? Men ask to ſpend on their Luſts, and to ſatisfy their own Ambition; ſome would have more Grace to be more eminent, or to have a more pleaſant Life; and this is but the ſeeking to ſpend on your Luſts. If Affection run in the Channel of a Duty, it is often muddy, and runneth thorow our Corruptions: Liberty in Duties is principled with carnal Affections and Self-love. Will not often the Wind of Applauſe in Company fill the Sails, and make your Courſe ſwifter and freer, nor when you are alone. And often much Love to a Particular, maketh more in ſeeking it. And that which is a Moth to eat up and conſume all our Duties, is Conceit and Self-confidence in going about them, and attributing to ourſelf after them. It is but very rare, that any Man both acteth from Jeſus Chriſt as the Principle, and alſo putteth over his Work on Chriſt ſingly as the End. Alas too often do Men draw out of Chriſt's Fulneſs, and raiſe up their own Glory upon it, and adorn themſelves with the Spoils of his Honour; for we uſe to pray from a Habit of it, and go to as Men acquainted with it, and when we get any Satisfaction to our own Minds, O how doth the Soul return on itſelf, and goeth not forward as it goeth; it is ſo well pleaſed with itſelf, when it getteth Liberty to approach, that it doth not put all over on Jeſus, and take Shame to itſelf. As long as there is a Body of Death within, Holineſs cannot be pure and unmixed; our Duties run thorow a dirty Channel, and cannot chooſe but contract Filth; while Sin lodgeth under one Roof ſo near Grace, Grace muſt be in its Exerciſe marred; and therefore the holy Apoſtle muſt cry, *Rom.* vii. 19. *The Good that I would, I do not: But the Evil which I would not, that I do.* And *Ver.* 24. *O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?*

Secondly, Tho' there were not ſuch Blemiſhes and Spots in the Face of our Righteouſneſs, yet it is here in a State of Imperfection, and but in its Minority, and ſo muſt be filthy in the Lord's Sight. It was perfect Holineſs according to the perfect Rule of God's Law, that *Adam* was to be juſtified by, according to the Covenant of Works, exact Obedience, not one wanting, or elſe all that can be done, came ſhort of Righteouſneſs: One Breach bringeth the Curſe on. All Obedience (if there be a failing in a little) will not bring the Bleſſing on; he that doth all, liveth; and he that doth not all, is curſed. And therefore Chriſtians, all you do cannot commend your Perſons to God, for if he examine you by the Rule of the Law, O how ſhort will the holieſt come? *Paul* and *Iſaiah* dare not come in ſuch a Reckoning; neither is all obeyed, nor any in the Meaſure and Manner commanded. And therefore, you might cry down all your Performances, when

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you could challenge them with no particular Blot, with this; all is short of the Command, and infinitely short. I have been aiming at Holiness so long, I have stretched out my Strength, and what have I attained? It may be, I have outstripped Equals, and there seemeth to be some Distance between me and others; nay, but the Command is unspeakably more before me nor I am before others. I have reached but a Span of that boundless Perfection of Holiness; it is but a Grain Weight of the eternal Weight of Grace, and I must forget it, and stand before God, as if I had lost Mind of Duties, appear in his Presence as if I had attained nothing; for the Length that is before my Hand drowneth up all Attainments.

Thirdly, Nay, but put the Case Man were perfect, *Yet should he not know his Soul, but despise his Life; the Lord putteth no Trust in his Servants, and his Angels he chargeth with Folly, and the Heavens are not clean in his Sight; how then must Man be abominable, that hath his Foundation in the Dust, and drinketh in Iniquity like Water? How should God magnify him? Or he be righteous that is born of a Woman?* Job. xxv. 4, 6. and xv. 14, 15. and iv. 18, 19. *Job* was a great Length in the Sight of his own Vileness and God's Holiness, when he saw this, *Though I were perfect, yet I would not know it, but despise it, I would not answer him, though I were righteous*, Chap. ix. 14, 15, 21. So unspeakably pure and clean is his Holiness, that all created Holiness hath a Spot in it before his, and evanisheth, as the Stars disappear when the Sun riseth, which seem something in the Darkness. The Angels Holiness, the Heaven's Glory, is nothing to him, *Before whom the Nations are as nothing*; so that it is all the Wonder of the World, that ever God stooped so far below himself, even to righteous *Adam*, as to make such a Covenant with him, to account him righteous in Obedience, *What is Man that thou should magnify him? When I look to the Heavens, and the Sun, the Work of thine Hands, Lord what is Man?* What is innocent Man in his Integrity, that thou should magnify him, to give him a Place to stand before thee, magnify him to be a Party-contracter with thy glorious Majesty? *Psal.* viii. 4, 5, 6. But now when this Covenant is broken, it is become impossible to a Son of *Adam*, ever to stand before God in his Perfection, for *How should Man be righteous that is born of a Woman?* Job xiv. 15. Since we once sinned, how should our Righteousness ever come in Remembrance? Therefore hath God chosen another Way to cover Man's Wickedness and Righteousness both, with his own Righteousness, his Son's Divine-human Righteousness, which is so suited in his infinite Wisdom for us: It is a Man's Righteousness, that it may agree with Men, and be a fit Garment to cover them; it is God's Righteousness, that it may be beautiful in God's Eyes, for he seeth his own Image in it. And it is not the created inherent Righteousness of Saints glorified, that shall be their upper Garment, that shall be their Heaven and Glory-suit, (so to speak,) they will not glory in this, but only in the Lamb's Righteousness for evermore. Saint-holiness must have a Covering above, for it cannot cover our Nakedness; and all the Songs of those that follow the Lamb make Mention of his Righteousness, even of his only: The Lamb is the Light and Sun of the City, the Lamb is the

Temple of it; in a Word, he is all that is beautiful and glorious: Every Saint hath put on the Lord Jesus, and is perfect thro' his Comeliness; at least, if the Holiness of Spirits of just Men made perfect, be the glorious Habit above; yet all the Beauty and Glory of it is from Christ Jesus, whose Image it is, and the Spirit whose Work it is. It shall be still true, all our Righteousness, as ours, is filthy, and all Holiness, as it hath a Relation to us, cannot please God; it must be spotted before his pure Eyes, but only it is accepted and clean, as it is Christ's and the Spirit's, as it is his own Garment put upon us, and his own Comliness making us perfect. It is not so much the inherent Cleanness of the the Saints Robes that maketh them beautiful in his Eyes, as this, *That they are washed in the Blood of the Lamb*, Rev. vii. 14.

Now from all this we would speak a Word to two Sorts of you; there is one great Point of Religion, that is the Principal and Foundation of all other, even free Justification, by Faith in Jesus, without our own Righteousness: And the most Part stumble here in the Entry; it is the greatest Obstruction of Souls coming to Christ Jesus, even the ignorant and blind Conceit and Fancy, that almost every Man hath of himself and his own Performances; the World will not make many believe the half of the Evil of themselves that is spoken in the Word. If you have a general Conviction of Sinfulness and Misery, yet you think to help it. If you sin, you use to make an amends, run to your Prayers and Repentance, to give God a Recompence, and satisfy your own Consciences: Speak now, is not this the Way you think to be saved? I shall do what I can, pray and mourn for Sin, and what I am not able to do, God must forgive; you will do all you are able or can, and God's Mercy must come in to supply the Want of your Righteousness: But this is to put a new Piece of Cloth in an old Garment, to make the Rent worse. Many of you have no other Ground of Confidence in the World, nothing to answer the Challenge of Conscience or satisfy Justice, but this, I repent, I am sorry, I mourn, I shall amend, I resolve never to do the like again. Now then from this Ground, we would declare unto you in the Lord's Name, you are yet unclean, both in Persons and Actions unjustified, because you have no other Covering but your own Duties and Performances; and let these be examined, and weighed in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, and they will be found light. *All your Righteousness* (saith the Lord) *is Filthiness*; you are unclean, you cannot deny, both by Birth and Education, you have often defiled yourselves with Sins you must confess: Now I ask you, How will you cover that Uncleanness and Nakedness? How will you hide it from God's Eyes and your own Conscience? You know no Way but this, I will pray, I will repent and amend. So then you cover yourself with Prayer, with Sorrow and Tears, and a Resolution of amending; this then is all your Covering and Ornament, something done by you; as many will make the Wings of two good Works stretch themselves out so far, as to cover and hide a Multitude of Offences between them. Therefore I declare in the Lord Jesus his Name unto you, whose Conscience must go alongs in the Acknowledgment and owning of your Case, that you have covered yourselves with your own Righteousness, that you have

have taken as filthy Raggs to cover your Nakedneſs and Sin with, as your Sins are, and ſo you have made an Addition to your Uncleanneſs, you are more unclean by your Prayers and Repentance than before; and ſo God is of more pure Eyes than to look graciouſly on ſuch as you are. You have gone about to eſtabliſh your own Righteouſneſs, and have not known the Righteouſneſs of God, and ſo you have come ſhort of it; you are yet Perſons in a State of Enmity, God is your Judge, you are Rebels; it concerns you much to heed this well, to judge of your own Actions and Perſons as God judgeth of them, for if God ſhall judge one Way, and you judge another Way, you may be far miſtaken in the End. If you have ſo good an Opinion of yourſelves and your Duties, that you can plead Intereſt in God for them, and abſolve yourſelves from ſuch Grounds; and if God have not the ſame Judgment, but rather think as evil of your Prayers as of your Curſing, and abhor the Thing that ſatisfyeth you, will it not be dreadful in the End? For his Judgment ſhall ſtand, and you will ſuccumb in Judgment, ſince you croſſed God's Mind; therefore we would have you ſolidly drink in this Principle of Religion, That Man is ſo unclean, and God ſo abhorreth him, that whatever he doth or can do, it cannot make him righteous; that no good Action can make him acceptable, and take away the Uncleanneſs of the evil Actions; and that any ſinful Action taketh away all the Cleanneſs of the good Actions. Once believe this, if I ſhould ſweat out my Life in ſerving God, and never riſe off my Knees, if I ſhould give my Body to the Fire for the Truth, if I ſhould melt away in Tears for Sin, all this is but filthy Rags, and I can never be accepted of God for all that, but the Matter of my Condemnation groweth; if I juſtify myſelf, my own Mouth proves me perverſe; God needeth no more but my good Deeds to condemn me for in all Juſtice; and therefore it is a Thing impoſſible, I will never put forth a Hand, or open a Mouth upon that Account any more. I will ſerve God, becauſe it is my Duty, but Life I will not expect by my Service, when I have done all, it is wholly Mercy that I am accepted; my good Works ſhall never come in Remembrance, I reſolve to be found, not having my own Righteouſneſs; I will appear among the ungodly Sinners, as one that hath no Righteouſneſs, that I may be juſtified only by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt. I ſay, drink in this Truth, and let it ſettle in your Hearts, and then we would hear Numbers cry, *O what ſhall I do to be ſaved?*

Now as for you who have fled unto Chriſt's Righteouſneſs only, and have caſt away your own as Dung and Droſs, as filthy Rags; as you have done right in the Point of Juſtification, judge ſo likewiſe after it. We would exhort you to judge ſo of your beſt Actions that are the Fruits of the Spirit, judge ſo of them as you have a Hand in them.

All our Righteouſneſs: Mark *Iſaiah* a holy Prophet joineth himſelf in with the Multitude. And the Truth is, the more Holineſs, the more Humility and Self-abaſing; for what is Holineſs, I pray you, but Self-denial, the abaſing of the Creature, and exalting of Chriſt Jeſus. This is the Croſs that the Saints muſt all bear, *Deny yourſelf, and follow me.* Grace doth not ſwell Men above others, it is Gifts, ſuch as Knowledge, that puffeth up; Charity or Love puffeth not up. Men are naturally high-minded, for Pride was the firſt Sin of *Adam*, and Grace

cometh to level Men, to make the high Mountains Vallies for Christ's Chariot; it maketh Men stoop low to enter the Door of the Kingdom: Therefore, if you have attained any Measure beyond others, if you would prove it real Grace and Holiness, do not exalt yourselves above others, be not high minded, come down and sit among the ungodly, among the unclean, and let not Grace given diminish the low Estimation of yourself in yourself. There is a Growing, that is but a Fancy and Mens Conceit; when Men grow above Ordinances, above other Christians, and can see none or few Christians but themselves, such a Growth is not real, 'tis but Fancy, 'tis but Swelling and Wind, and must be pricked to let it out. A holy Prophet came in among an unclean People, he did not say, *Stand by, I am holier than thou.* Such a Man as can find no Christian about him, even though to the Judgment of all others, they seek God more than he, such a Man hath not real solid Grace, his Holiness is prosane Holiness, and proud Holiness; for true Holiness is humble Holiness, and in Honour preferreth others.

There is a great Fault among those who have fled to Christ's Righteousness in Justification, that they use to come forth from Duties, as a Stomach from a Honeycomb. Oft times we make our Liberty and Access to God the Ground of our Acceptation; and according to the Ebbings and Flowings of our inherent Righteousness, so doth the Faith and Confidence of Justification ebb and flow: Christians, this ought not to be; in so doing, you make your own Righteousness your Righteousness before God; for when the Unsatisfaction in the Point of Duty, maketh you question your Interest so often, is not the Satisfaction of your Minds in Duties, made the Ground of your pleading Interest? Give you Liberty and Access, you can believe any Thing; remove it, and you can believe nothing. Certainly this is a sandy Foundation, you ought to build nothing on Performances, you should be as vile in your own Eyes, and think your Nakedness as open, when you come neareſt God, when you have most Liveliness, as when he hideth his Face, and Duty withereth; will filthy Rags be your Ornament? No Christians, be more acquaint with the unspotted Righteousness of the immaculate Lamb of God, and find as great Necessity of covering your cleaneſt Duties with it, as your foulest Faults, and thus shall you be kept still humble and vile in your own Eyes, and have continual Imployment for Christ Jesus: Your best Estate should not puff you up, and your worst Estate should not cast you down; therefore be much in the Search of the Filthiness of your holy Actions. This were a spiritual Study, a noble Discovery to unbowel your Duties, to divide them, and give unto God what is God's, and take unto yourselves what is your own: The Discovery of Filthiness in them, needeth not hinder his Praise; and the Discovery of Grace in them, needeth not mar your Shame. God hath most Glory when we have most Shame, these two grow in just Proportion, so much is taken from God, as is given to the Creature.

Thirdly, We would also press you from this Ground to long much to be cloathed upon with Immortality, to put off the filthy Rags of Time, and Earth-righteousness, and to be cloathed upon with the white Robs of the Righteousness of the Saints. As you would dwell near the Fountain here, and be still washing your Garments, and offering all your

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Sacrifices in him who sanctifieth all, so would you pant and thirst for this spotless Garment of Glory: Glory is nothing but perfect Holiness, Holiness washen and made clean in the Lamb's Blood: Your Rags are for the Prison and for sojourning; when you come to your Father's House, your Raiment shall be changed. Therefore Christians, every one of you aspire higher, sit not down in Attainments, forget what is behind, and press forward: Let perfect Holiness be in your Eye and Purpose, sit not behind it: All our Time-duties have much Filthiness, long for the pure Stream that waters the City above: Grace is not in its native Place, it is corrupted and mixed here: Heaven is the own Element of it, and there is Grace without Mixture. Undervalue all your Performances, till you be above, where that which is in Part shall be done away, where no unclean Thing entereth.

Fourthly, This likewise holdeth out to you a continual Necessity of Washing. You must take up House beside the Fountain opened in the House of *David*; and never look on any Piece of inherent Righteousness, but see a Necessity of dipping it in the Lamb's Blood; and therefore should you pray always in Christ's Name, that the Prayer which of itself, would be cast as Dung on our Face, may have a sweet Savour from him. Cover your Holiness with Christ's Righteousness, and make Mention of it only.

SERMON XVII.

Isa. lxiv. 6. —— *And we all do fade as a Leaf, and our Iniquities, like the Wind, have taken us away.*

HERE they join the Punishment with the deserving Cause, their Uncleanness and their Iniquities, and so take it upon them, and subscribeth to the Righteousness of God's Dealing.

We will say this much in general, first, No Body needeth to quarrel God for his Dealing, *He will always be justified when he is judged.* If the Lord deal more sharply with you than with others, you may judge, there is a Difference between your Condition and theirs, as well as in the Lord's Dispensation, even as this People do, *Ver.* 5, 6, It is a strange Saying, *Lam.* iii. 31. *The Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.* That is, (as we conceive) the Lord hath not such Pleasure in trampling on Men, as he might do on the Dust of his Feet. Tho' he be absolute sovereign Lord of the Creature, and Men be but as the Dust of his Feet, and he may do with his own what he pleaseth, and none ask, What dost thou? Yet the Lord useth not to walk according to his own Absoluteness, he hath another ordinary Rule whereby he worketh, a Rule of Justice and Equity; especially in the punish-

puniſhing of Men, he uſeth not to afflict Men for his Pleaſure, as Tyrants uſe to deſtroy their People. The Lord exerceth his Sovereignity another Way, and if he be abſolute and illimited in any Thing, it is in ſhewing Mercy on Men: But in Judgment, there may be ſtill ſome Reaſon gotten for it in the Creature beſide the Will of God; ſo that (to ſpeak with Reverence of his Majeſty) Strokes are often drawn out of his Hands, he getteth ſo much Provocation ere he ſtrike, and holdeth off ſo long, threatneth, and giveth Warning thus before Strokes, as if it were againſt his Will to lay on, as if his Heart were broken with us.

Secondly, If Men knew themſelves and their own Sinfulneſs, they would not challenge God with Unrighteouſneſs, but put their Mouth in the Duſt, and keep Silence. And it is from this Ground, that this People do not charge God. Sin is of ſuch infinite Deſert and Merit, becauſe againſt infinite Majeſty, that God cannot go beyond it in Puniſhment; and therefore *Jeremiah*, when he is wading out of the deep Waters of ſore Temptation and ſad Diſcouragement, he pitcheth and caſteth Anchor at this ſolid Ground, *It it of the Lord's Mercy that we are not conſumed*, Lam. iii. 22. What do I mean, thus to charge God, as if he dealt rigorouſly? No, no, It is his Mercy that a Remnant is left, our Strokes are not pure Juſtice, our Cup is mixed, Mercy is the greateſt Part: Whatever is behind utter Deſtruction, whatever is below the Deſert of Sin, which is Hell and Damnation, all this muſt be reckoned up to Mercy: That I am yet alive, and ſo may have Hope, this is Mercy, *For why ſhould a living Man complain*? Ver. 39. That a Rod is come to awake us out of Security, this is Mercy, for we might have ſlept to Death. And this wholſome Counſel got *Job* of his Friends, to ſtay his murmuring and grudging at God's Diſpenſations, *Job* xi. 6. Why doſt thou complain *Job*? Know but thy Sins, and there ſhall be no room for Complaint; look but unto God's Secrets of Wiſdom, and his Law, and ſee it is double to what you have known, your Obligation is infinite more than you thought upon, and then how great and numberleſs muſt Iniquities be? Know therefore, ſaith *Zophar*, God exacteth of thee leſs than thine Iniquities deſerve; God exacteth not according to Law, he craveth not according to the Obligation, but bids write down fifty in his Bill of Affliction, when an hundred are written in our Bill of deſerving: So then complain not, it is Mercy that Life is ſaved. Are you Men and living Men? Wonder at this, and wonder not that you are not wealthy, are not honourable, ſeeing you are Sinners: All that came on *Jeruſalem* maketh not *Ezra* think God out of Bounds, *Chap.* ix. 13. As we are leſs than the leaſt of God's Mercies, and all our Goodneſs deſerveth none of them, ſo is the leaſt Sin greater than the greateſt of all his Judgments, and deſerveth ſtill more: Nay, if there were no more but original Corruption common to Men, and the Filthineſs that accompanieth Mens good Actions, yet is God righteous in puniſhing ſeverely, and this People acknowledge it ſo. You uſe to enquire what Sin hath ſuch a Man done, when ſo terrible Judgments come on? Nay, enquire no more, he is a Sinner, and it is Mercy, there is not more, and it is ſtrange Mercy that it is not ſo with you alſo. You uſe to ſpeak fooliſhly when God's Hand is upon you, I hope I have my Puniſhment here, I hope to ſuffer here for my Sins: Poor

Souls

Souls, if God make you suffer for Sins, it will be another Matter; tho' now your Punishment be above your Strength and Patience, yet it is below your Sin: As Sin hath all Evil in it, so must Hell have all Punishment in it: The Torment of a Gravel, racking with the Stone, and such like, are but play to Hell, these are but Drops of that Ocean, that you must drink out, and you shall go out of one Hell into a worse; Eternity is the Measure of its Continuance, and the Degrees of itself are answerable to its Duration. There is much Impatience even among God's Children under the Rod: You vex and torment yourselves, and doth well to be angry. Any Piece of thwarting Dispensation, that goes cross to your Humour and Inclination, embitters your Spirit against God, and maketh you go cross to his Providence: How often do your Hearts say, Why am I thus? What aileth the Lord at me? But Christians, learn to study your own Deservings, and stop your Mouth with that, that you may not speak against Heaven. If you knew Sin well, you would not wonder at Judgments, you would rather wonder that you are out of Hell; know what Right God hath over you, and how little Use he maketh of it against you; when you repine at a little, shall it not be Righteousness with God to exact more, and let you know your Deserving better. He that thinketh it Rigor in God to exact fifty, it is Justice that God crave an hundred. If the Law require forty Stripes, and he give but one, will you not rather commend and proclaim his Clemency, than speak of his Cruelty? Wonder that God hath spared us so long. Sin is come to great Maturity, as Pride is said to blossom and bud into a Rod, so all Sins are blossomed and budded into the very Harvest, that the Sickle may be put in. If we should have Cities desolate, and our Land consumed; if we should take up *Jeremiah*'s Lamentation, and our Case be made paralel to theirs, we have then been punished less than our Iniquities deserved.

There are some godless People so black-mouthed, as to speak against Heaven when God correcteth them, they follow the Counsel of *Job*'s Wife, *Curse God and die*, if God but touch them a little in that which is dearest unto them, they *kick against the Pricks*, and run Hard-heads with God. As we have known some foolish Women when their only Child hath been removed, blaspheme, saying, What can God do more to me, let him do what he can? O Madness and Wickedness of Men! Cannot God do more, when he casteth them in Hell? Thou shalt acknowledge that it is more. Some have left off to seek God and turned profane, because of the Lord's Correction: But you would know that all that is here is but Arles. If God had done his worst, you might think yourselves out of his Common; nay, but he hath yet more to do, the full Sum is to be payed. It were therefore Wisdom yet to make Supplication to thy Judge.

But *Thirdly*, Sins and Iniquities have a great Influence in the Decay of Nations and Persons, and Change of their outward Condition, when it is joined with the Wind of God's Displeasure. The Calamity of this People is set down in excellent Terms, alluding to a Tree in the Fall of the Leaf: We (saith he) were once in our Land as a green Tree busked round about with Leaves and Fruit: Our Church and State was in a flourishing Condition; at least, nothing was wanting to make outward Splendor and Glory; we were immoveable in our own Land,

as *David* said in his Prosperity, *I shall never be moved*, so did we dream of Eternity in earthly *Canaan*: But now Lord, we are like a Tree in the Fall of the Leaf, Sin hath obstructed the Influence of Heaven, hath drawn away the Sap of thy Presence from among us, so that we did fade as a Leaf before its Fall: We were prepared so by our Sins for Judgment, visible Draughts and Prognosticks of it were to be read upon the Condition and Frame of all Spirits and People; and then did our Iniquities raise the Storm of thy Indignation, and that like a Whirlewind hath blown the withering Leaves off the Tree, hath driven us out of our own Land, and scattered us among Strangers. Sin and Uncleanness and the Filthiness of our Righteousness prepared us for the Storm, made us light Matter that could resist no Judgment, made us Matter combustible; and then Iniquities and Sin rising up to Iniquities, cometh to such a Degree, hath accomplished the Judgment, put Fire among us, made us as the Birk in Yule-even.

First, It is familiar in the Scripture, that People in a prosperous Condition are compared unto *a green Tree flourishing*, Psal. xxxvii. 35. The Wicked's Prospering is like a green Bay-tree spreading himself in Power, spreading out his Arms, as it were, over moe Lands, to conquer them, over moe People, to subject them. And this is often the Temptation of the godly, and so doth the Lord himself witness of this People, *Jer.* xi. 16. *I have called thy Name a green Olive-tree, fair and of godly Fruit.* This was once their Name, tho' it be now changed. Now they are called a fading withering Tree without both Leaves and Fruit. Now their Place doth not so much as know them, they are removed as in a Moment, *Psal.* xxxvii. 36. And this Comparison giveth us to understand something of the Nature of human Glory and Pomp. The faireſt and most beautiful Excellency in the World, the Prosperity of Nations and People is but like the Glory of a Tree in the Spring or Summer: Yea, the Scripture useth to undervalue it more than so, and the Voice commandeth to cry, *Isa.* xl. 6, 7, 8, *All Flesh is Grass, and the Goodliness thereof as the Flower of the Field, the one withereth, and the other fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.* A Tree hath some Stablility in it, but the Flower of the Field is but of a Month or a Week's standing; nay, of one Day's standing, for in the Morning the Grass is green, and the Sun scorcheth it ere Night, so that one Sun's Course shall see it both growing green and fading: So is the Goodliness, the very Perfection, the Quintessence (so to speak) and the Abstract of Creatures Perfections: Outward Accommodation in a World is as fading a Thing as the Flower is, as Smoke is, it is so vanishing that it bides but a Puft of his Breath to blow it to nothing. *Job* hath a strange Expression, *Thou looketh upon me, and I am not*, Job vii. 8. The Lord needeth no more but stare on the most durable Creature, and look it not only out of Countenance, but also look it into its first nothing, look it out of Glory, out of Being; and therefore you would not trust in these uncertain Things, that can take Wings and leave you. When you have Accommodation outwardly to your Mind, do not build your Nest in it: These Leaves of Prosperity will not cover you always, there is a Time when they will fall. Nations have their Winter and their Summer, Persons have them likewise, as these must change

change in Nature, so must they do in their Lot. Heaven only is one Day, one Spring perpetually blossoming and bringing forth Fruit: There is the Tree of Life that bringeth forth Fruit every Month, that hath both Spring and Harvest all the Year over. Christians, sit not down under the green Tree of worldly Prosperity: If you do, the Leaves will come down about you; the Gourd you trust in, may be eaten up in a Night: Your Winter will come on, so as you shall forget the former Days, as if they had never been. We desire you to be armed for Changes: Are not Matters in the Kingdom still going about? All Things are subject to Revolution and Change, and every Year hath its own Summer and Winter, so hath it pleased the Lord *to set the one over against the other, that Man might find nothing after him*, Eccles. vii. 14. Therefore we would have you cast your Accounts so, as the former Days of Darkness may return, and the Land be covered with mourning Cloaths.

But would you know what is the Original of the Creatures Vanity, what is the Moth that eats up the Glory and Goodliness of Creatures Enjoyments? Here it is, *Sin and Iniquities*. It was Sin that first subjected the Creation to Vanity, *Rom.* viii. 19, 20. This inferior World was to have been a durable House for an immortal Soul, but Sin made Man mortal, and the World corruptible, and from this proceeds all the Tempests and Disorders that seem to be in the Creation. It is this still: It is Sin that raiseth the Storm of the Lord's Wrath, which bloweth away the withered Leaves of Mens Enjoyments. Sin drieth up all the Sap and Sweetness of the Creature-comforts; it maketh the Leaves of the Tree wither, dries the Sap away to the Root, hindereth the Influence of God's Blessing to come through the Veins of worldly Prosperity: For what is the Vertue and Sap of Creatures? It is even God's Blessing; and therefore the Bread nourisheth not, but the Word and Command of God, *Matth.* iii. 4. That is a Right unto the Creatures by Jesus Christ, when Possession of them is entered into by Prayer and Thanksgiving, for all Right is sanctified by these, and *it is the Iniquities of Men, that separateth between God and them*, Isa. lix. 2. And when God is separated and divided from Enjoyments, they must needs be empty Shells and Husks, no Kernel in them, for *God filleth all in all, is all in all*; and remove him, and you have nothing, your Meat and Drink is no Blessing, your Table is a Snare, your Pleasures and Laughter have Sadness in them; at least, they are like the vanishing Blaze of Thorns under a Pot: And therefore, *when God is angry for Sin, Men's Beauty consumeth as before the Moth*, Psal. xxxix. 11. When God beginneth to shew himself terrible, because of Sin, poor Man, tho' of late spreading his Boughs out, yet all falleth, and like Ice melteth as before the Sun, which just now seemed as solid as Stone. O but *David* was sensible of this, and could speak from much Experience, Psal. xxxii. 3, 4. *The Anger of the Lord did eat him up, and dried his Moisture*. It might be read in his Countenance, all the World could not content him, all the Showers of Creatures dropping Fatness could not keep Sap in him, God's Displeasure scorcheth so; nay, is within him, that no hiding Place is to be found in the World, no Shadow of a Rock among all the Creatures in such a weary Land. *Moses* and the People knew this well,

Pſal. xc. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. The Lord's Diſpleaſure carried them away, as a Flood coming down carried all headlong with it; it ſcorched them, and made them wither as Graſs. When God ſetteth Iniquities before him, that which is the Soul's Secret, beginneth to imprint it in viſible Characters on the Rod, and writeth his Sin on his Puniſhment; then no Wonder that Days be ſpent in Vanity and Grief, ſince they are paſt over in his Wrath, *Job* xiii. 25. Then doth a Soul loath its dainty Meat, and then doth the Ox low over his Fodder, Meat is laid before, and he cannot touch it, becauſe of the Terrors of the Almighty; and that which before he would not once touch, would not enter in Terms of Communing with, as the Lord's Threatnings, he muſt now ſit down, and eat them up as his Meat, how ſorrowful ſoever, *Job.* vi. 5, 6, 7.

But *Secondly*, When Sin hath prepared a Man for Judgment, then if Iniquity be added to Sin, this raiſeth the Storm, and kindleth the Fire to conſume the combuſtible Matter: When Sin hath given many Blows by preparatory Corrections at the Root of a Man's Pleaſure and Credit, it will at length bring on a fatal Stroke that ſhall drive the Tree to the Ground. There are ſome preparatory Judgments, and ſome conſummatory; ſome withers the Leaf, and ſome blows it quite off; ſome make Men like the Harveſt, ripe to put the Sickle of Judgment into it. The Corruption of a Land, the Univerſality of it, and Formality in worſhiping of God, ripeneth a Land for the Harveſt of Judgment, expoſeth it to any Storm, leaveth it open to the Lord's Wrath, ſo that there is nothing to hold his Hand and keep off the Stroke: But when the Wind ariſeth, and Iniquities have made it tempeſtuous, then who may ſtand? It will ſweep away Nations and People as a Flood, and make their Place not to know them, ſo that there ſhall be neither Leaf nor Branch left. There is often a great Calm with great Provocations, and Iniquities cry *Peace, Peace.* But when once the Cry of it is gone up to Heaven, and hath engaged God's Anger againſt a People or Perſon, then it raiſeth a Whirlwind that taketh all away. Now, all this belongeth to you, we told you the Acknowledgment of Sin was yours already, and a Wonder it is that the Complaint is not ours alſo: Always this ought to be an Admonition and Example to us, on whom the Ends of the World are fallen. Therefore we would declare this unto you, that Sin and Iniquities have Judgment in the Tail. Now you ſit at Peace, every one in his own Dwelling, and ſpread forth your Branches: But is there not much Uncleanneſs among you? We would have you trouble your carnal Peace and Security, trouble your Eaſe with Thoughts of this. And we have Ground to give this Warning, becauſe if there were no more but the Iniquity of our holy Things, the Formality of our Service, the Commonneſs of Spirit in Worſhip, this might be enough to raiſe the Storm. You know not for what Reaſons to be afraid of Judgment, look but on original Corruption, look on the Defilement of your religious Actions, and then find Ground ſufficient of fading away. Tho' now you ſit ſtill, and ſeem to be ſo ſettled, as you would never be moved: You dream of an Eternity here, you cleave in your Hearts to your Houſes and Lands: You ſtick as faſt to the World, and will not part with it, as a Leaf to a Tree; yet behold the Wind of the Lord may ariſe,

that

that shall drive you away, take your Soul from these Things and then whose shall they be? If you will not fear temporal Judgments, yet I pray you fear eternal, fear Hell. May not the Lord shake you off this Tree of Time, and take you out of the Land of the Living, to receive your Portion. There is not only an universal Deadness of Spirit on the Land, but a prophane Spirit, Iniquities, abominable Sins abound. Every Congregation is overgrown with Scandals; and for you, none may more justly complain: We are all unclean, Sin is not in Corners, but Men declare their Sin as *Sodom*, Sin is come to the Maturity, Defection and Apostacy is the Temper of all Spirits; and above all, the general Contempt and slighting of this glorious Gospel, is the Iniquity of *Scotland*, so that we wonder that the withered Leaves yet stick to, that the Storm is not yet raised, and we blown away. Now you are like Stones, your Hearts as Adamants, and cannot be moved with his Threatnings, the Voice of the Lord's Word doth not once move you: You sin and are not afraid; nay, but when God's Anger shall join with Iniquity, and the Voice of his Rod and Displeasure roar, this shall make the Mountains to tremble, the Rocks to move, and how much more shall it drive away a Leaf? You seem now Mountains, but when God shall plead, you shall be like the Chaff driven too and fro. O how easy a Matter shall it be to God to blow a Man out of his Dwelling-place! Sin hath prepared you for it, he needeth no more but blow by his Spirit, or look upon you, and you will not be. You who now are lofty and proud, and maintain yourself against the Word, when you come to reckon with God, and he entereth in Judgment, you shall not stand: *You will consume as before the Moth*, your Hearts will fail you, *Who may abide the Day of his Coming?* It will be so terrible, and so much the more terrible, that you never dreamed of it: If the Example of this People will not move you, do but cast you Eyes on *Ireland*, who all do fade as a Leaf, and their Iniquities have taken them away out of their own Land. Shall not the seeing of the Eye, nor the hearing of the Ear teach you? What Security do you promise to yourselves? Have not we sinned as much as they? Were not they his People as we? Certainly since God waiteth longer on you, the Stroke must be the greater: Provoked Patience must turn Fury. If you would then prevent this Peoples Complaint, go about such a serious Acknowledgment of your Sins, *Search your Ways, and turn again to the Lord.* And let not every Man sit down in a general Notion of Sin, but unbowel it until you see Uncleanness; go up to the Fountain-head, Original Corruption; go down to all the Streams, even the Iniquity of holy Things: Let every Man be particular in the Search of his own Provocations personal, and every one be publick in the general Sins of the Land, that you may confess out of Knowledge and Sense, *We are all unclean*, &c.

SERMON XVIII.

Isa. lxiv. 7. *And there is none that calleth upon thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee*, &c.

THEY go on in the Confession of their Sins: Many a Man hath soon done with that: A general Notion of Sin is the highest Advancement in Repentance that many attain to. You may see here, Sin and Judgment mixed in thorow other in their Complaint: They do not so fix their Eyes upon their desolate Estate of Captivity, as to forget their Provocations. Many a Man would spend more Affection, and be more pathetick in the Expression of his Misery when it is pungent, nor he can do when he speaketh of his Sins. We would observe from the Nature of this Confession, something to be a Pattern of your Repenance. And it is this. When the Spirit convinceth, and Men are serious in Repentance, then the Soul is more searching, more universal, more particular in Acknowledgement of Sins. These are Characters of the Spirit's Work. *First*, The Spirit discovereth unto Men, not only Sin but the Loathsomness of Sin, its haincus Nature, how offensive it is to God's holy Eye. Many of you know Abundance of evil Deeds, and call them Sins, but you have never taken up Sin's ugly Face, never seen it in the Glass of the holy Law, Uncleanness itself, because you do not abhor yourselves; poor and low Thoughts of God maketh mean and shallow Thoughts of Sin. You would be as *Job* vile, *Chap.* xl. 4. and *abhor yourselves in Dust and Ashe*, Chap. xlii. 6. As God's Holiness grew great in your Eyes, Sin's Uncleannéss would grow proportionably, *Isa.* vi. 3, 5. And here your Repentance halteth in the very Entry.

But *Secondly*, The Spirit discovereth not only the Uncleanness of Men's Natures, and leadeth them up to original Corruption, but the Spirit also leadeth Men alongs all the Streams, not only these that break out, but these who go under Ground, and have a more secret and subtile Conveyance: It concludeth not only open Breaches of the Command under Filthiness, but also all a Man's own Righteousness, tho' never so refined; it concludeth it also a defiled Garment, so that the Soul can look no where but see Sin and Uncleanness in its Ornaments and Duties. And thus it appeareth before God without such a Covering, openeth up its Soul, hideth not Sin with the Covering of Duties, but seeth a Necessity of another Covering for all. Now therefore let the most Part of you conclude, that you have never yet gotten your Eyes open to see Sin or confess it, because when you sit down to count your Sins, there

there are many Things that you call not Sin, you use not to reckon your Praying and Repentance among Sins: Nay, because you have so much Confidence in your Repentance and Confession, you have never repented: You must see a Necessity of a Covering of Christ's Righteousness above all; Faith in Jesus must cover Repentance and itself both, with the glorious Object of it. But alas, how soon are many at an End of Confession; some particular gross Actions may come in Remembrance, but no more. Sum up all your Confessions, they have never yet pitched on the thousand Part of your Guiltiness, no not in Kinds, let be in Number.

But *Thirdly*, The Spirit convinceth spiritually, and particularly both; it convinceth of spiritual Sins, as we said last, of the Iniquity of holy Things, and especially of the most substantial Duties Faith and Prayer, *John* xvi. 8, 9; there are not many of you have come this length to see your want of Prayer. No, your own Words do witness against you, for you use to say, I pray Day and Night, I believe in God with all my Heart. Now therefore, out of your own Mouth shall you be condemned, when the Spirit convinceth you of Sin, you will see no Faith, no Prayer at the first opening of the Eyes. But I add, there is no true Confession but it is particular, the Spirit useth not to bewilder Mens Spirits in a general Notion only, and a wild Field of unknown Sins: And such are many of your Convictions: You mourn for Sin (as you say) and yet you cannot condescend on a Particular that burdeneth your Conscience; you grant you have many Sins, but sit down to count them, and there is a short Count of them. Now, do you not reflect back upon former Humiliations in publick, and former Acknowledgements of Sins in private? Do you not yet return upon your own Hearts to lay home this sad Challenge. I have never repented, I do not yet repent: Must not all your solemn Approaches be Iniquity, and Abomination, while your Souls are not afflicted for Sin, while you can see so few Sins, *&c.* The fasting Days of *Scotland* will be numbered in the Roll of greatest Provocations, because there is no real and spiritual Conviction of Sin among us: Custom now hath taken away the Solemnity, and there remaineth nothing but the very Name: Is this the Fast that the Lord chooseth? No, believe it, this shall add to your Provocation, and rather hasten lingering Judgment, than keep it off; we would beseech you this Day, pray for Pardon of former abused Fasts. If you had no more to mourn for, this might spend the Day and our Spirits both, and exhaust all our present Supplications, even the Wall of Partition that stands between God and *Scotland*, which all our former solemn Humiliations hath built up, a great deal higher than other Sins could reach.

There is none that calleth upon thy Name.] Did not this People make many Prayers, *Isa.* i. 15. before the Captivity? And did they not cry, which noteth some Fervency in it? And fast a little before it in *Jeremiah*'s Time, *Chap.* xi. 11. and xiv. 12. in the Time of it, *Ezek.* viii. 18. *Mic.* iii. 4. *Zech.* vii. 3. How then is it that the Prophet now on the Watch-tower looking round about him to take up the Peoples Condition, and being led by the Spirit so far as to the Case of the Captives in *Babel*, can find no Prayer, no Calling? And was not *Daniel* so too, *Dan.* ix. 13 Lo, then here is the Construction that the Spirit of God put-

putteth on many Prayers and Faſtings in a Land, *There is none calleth on thy Name*; there is none that prayeth faithfully and fervently, few to count upon that prayeth any. It may be there are many publick Prayers, but who prayeth in ſecret, and mourneth to God alone? There are many Prayers, but the Inſcription is, *To the unknown God*, to a nameleſs God, your praying is not a calling on his Name, as a known God and revealed in the Word.

This then we would ſay unto you, that there may be many Prayers in your Account, and none in God's. There are many Prayers of Men that God counteth no more of, than the howling of a Dog. *Firſt*, The Cry of Mens Practices is often louder than their Prayers, and goeth up to Heaven, that the Cry of Prayer cannot be heard. When Mens Converſation is flat contrary to their Supplications, Supplication is no calling on his Name, but charming rather. *Sodom*'s Abominations had a Cry up to God, *Gen.* xviii. 21. So *Abel*'s Blood had a Cry for Vengeance, which *Cain*'s Prayers could not outcry. Thus the Lord would not hear many Prayers, *Iſa.* i. 15. becauſe Hands and Practices were polluted: You that know no Worſhip of God, but in ſuch a ſolemn Duty; your Religion is ſummed up and confined within the Limits of Temple-worſhip, Family-exerciſe and Prayer; certainly the reſt of your Converſation muſt ſpeak more: God will not hear but ſuch as worſhip him and do his Will, *John* iv. 31. Your Prayer is a dark Parable, if your Converſation expone it not. This I ſpeak for this End, to put many of you out of your falſe Ground of Confidence: You have nothing but your Prayers to truſt unto; and for your Converſation, you never go about it effectually to reform it, but goeth on in that which you pray againſt: We declare unto you the Truth, your Prayers are Abomination, *Prov.* xxviii. 9. The Wicked may have Prayers, and therefore think not to pleaſe God and flatter him with your Mouths, when your Converſation is Rebellion: Since you hear not him in his Commands, God will not hear you in your Petitions, *Prov.* i. 24, 28. You ſtopped your Ear at his Reproof, God will ſtop his Ear at your Requeſt. If you will go to Heaven by your own Righteouſneſs, I pray you follow more after it, make the Garment more to cover your Nakedneſs; the Skirt of a Duty is not ſufficient.

Secondly, When Iniquity is regarded in the Heart, (and Idols ſet up in God's Place,) God will not own ſuch a Worſhip, but ſendeth a Man to the Idols he ſerveth, *Pſal.* lxvi. 18. *Ezek.* xiv. 3, 4. Do you not often pray to God againſt a Corruption, when your Heart cleaveth unto it, and what your Mouth ſaith, your Heart contradicteth? Light and Conſcience often extort a Confeſſion of beloved Sins, while the Temper of the Heart hath this Language, Lord grant not my Requeſt: And therefore, if there be a Prayer for Pardon of Guilt, yet there is no thorough Reſolution to quite the Sin; and as long as a Soul is not reſolved to quite the Sin, there can be no ingenuous Confeſſion of it, and no Prayer for removing the Guilt can be heard. You cannot imploy Chriſt in his Office of Mediatorſhip as a Prieſt to interceed and offer Sacrifice for Sin, unleſs you as ſincerely imploy him as a Sanctifier and Redeemer; and therefore Prayer that ſeparateth Chriſt's Offices, and calleth not on whole Chriſt calleth not on his Name, for his Name is *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. How can the

the Lord be inquired of by such a One who cometh to mock him, putteth up an Idol in the Heart, and yet prayeth against it, or some other Sin, while he is not resolved to quite it. Shall God be resolute to help, when we are not earnest in seeking it? No wonder God answer you according to the Idol: No wonder you be given up to serve Idols, and your Sin grow upon you as a Plague for your Hypocrisy; when you engage your Heart too much to any Creature, and come to pray and enquire of the Lord in your Necessity, shall it not be Righteousness with him, to send you to your God. *When thou cryest, let thy Companies deliver thee*, Isa. lvii. 13. O Man cry unto thy Bosom-idol, and let it help thee, since thou trustest to it, and spendeth thy Heart on it, *Deut.* xxxii. 37, 38. *Where is the God that drunk the Wine of your Offerings, and eat the Fat of your Sacrifices?* Where is the Creature that you have made your Heart an Altar to, to send up the Flames of your choicest Thoughts and Affections to it? Let this rise up, and help you now, saith the Lord. Therefore we exhort you, if you would have your Prayers a Delight, be upright in the Thing you seek, and see that you intertain no known Sin, give it no Heart-allowance.

Thirdly, There are many Prayers not heard, not known, because the Mouth outcrieth the Heart. It is the Sacrifice of the contrite Heart that God despiseth not. The Prayers of this People were such, *Isa.* xxix. 13. *They drew near with the Mouth, but the Heart was far away.* It is Worship in Spirit and Truth that God loveth, *Joh.* iv. 23. Since Prayer is a Communion of God with the Creature, a Meeting of one with God, and speaking Face to Face; God who is a Spirit and immortal, must have a Spirit to meet with, a Soul to speak to him. Now, do you not find your Hearts gading abroad even in Duty? Is it not most about your Corns and Lands in the Time of solemn Worship? Therefore God getteth no more but a Carcase to keep Communion with; he may have as much Fellowship with the Stones of the Wall, and Timber of the House, as he can have with your Ears and Mouths, while you remove your Hearts to attend other Things. And I would say more, if your Mind be present, yet your Heart is gone, sometimes, yea often, both are gone abroad: Sometimes the Mind and Thought stayeth, but the Affection and Heart is not with it, and so the Mind's Residence is not constant: Your Thought may come in as a way-faring Man, but tarrieth not all Night, dwelleth not. Now speak to it, even Christians, may not your Prayers often have a contrary Interpretation to what they pretend? You pray so coldrifely and formally, as God will interprete, you have no Mind to it: We ask as we seemed indifferent whether our Petition be granted or not. Should the Lord be affected with your Petitions, when you yourselves are not affected much? Should his Bowels of Zeal sound within him, when yours are silent? *It is fervent Prayer availeth much*, Isa. v. 16. A Heart sent out with the Petition, and gone up to Heaven, cannot but bring back an Answer. If Prayer carry not the Seal of the Heart and Soul in it, God cannot own it, or send it back with his Seal of Acceptation.

Fourthly, Many Prayers are not *calling on God's Name:* And no wonder that when People pray, yet the Spirit say, *None calleth on thy Name*, for Prayer is made, as to an unknown God, and God is not taken up according to his

Name,

Name, which are his glorious Attributes, whereby he manifeſteth himſelf in his Word. To *call on God's Name*, is ſo to pray to God, as to take him up, as he hath revealed himſelf. And what is the Lord's Name? Hear himſelf ſpeak to *Moſes*, Exod. xxxiii. 19. and xxxiv. 6, 7. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth. Keeping Mercy for thouſands: Forgiving Iniquity, and Tranſgreſſion, and Sin, and that will by no Means clear the guilty.* Now to call on this Name, is for the Soul in Prayer, to have a ſuitable Stamp on it: Every Attribute of God taking deep Impreſſion in the Heart. And ſo God's Name to be written on the very Petitions: And ſhortly, we may ſay, the Spirit ſhould have the Impreſſion of God's Greatneſs and Majeſty, of his Goodneſs and Mercy, of his Terribleneſs and Juſtice. This is the Order that God proclaimeth his Name into. In the Entry, the Supplicant ſhould behold the glorious Soveraignity and infinite Diſtance between God and the Creature, that he may have the Stamp of Reverence and Abaſement upon his Spirit, and may ſpeak out of the Duſt, as it becometh the Duſt of the Ballance and Foot-ſtool to do to him, who ſitteth on the Circle of the Heaven as his Throne. And this I muſt ſay, there is little Religion and Godlineſs among us, becauſe every Man is ignorant of God. Even God's Children do more ſtudy themſelves, and their Condition, than God's Greatneſs and Abſoluteneſs. Who ſearches God's Infiniteneſs in his Word and Works till he behold a Wonder, and be drowned in a Myſtery? O but the Saints of old did take up God at a greater Diſtance from the Creatures, they waded far into this boundleſs Ocean of God's Majeſty, till they were over Head and Ears, and were forced to cry out, *Who can find out the Almighty to Perfection?* All theſe are but Parts of him, his Back-parts. There is more real Divinity and Knowledge of God in one of *Job*'s Friends Diſcourſes, one of *David*'s Prayers, than now in twenty Sermons of gracious Men, or many Prayers or Conferences of Saints. But withal you muſt ſtudy his Goodneſs and Mercy, and this maketh up the moſt Part of his Name; the Definition of God hath moſt of this, ſo that it may be ſaid truly, that Mercy is his Delight, Mercy, as it were, ſwelleth over the reſt: God were not acceſſible, unleſs Mercy did temper it. Behold then Greatneſs to humble, and Goodneſs to make bold, that you may have Acceſs. As Greatneſs ſhould leave the Stamp of Reverence on your Petitions, ſo ſhould Mercy and Goodneſs imprint them with Faith and Confidence; and that the rather, becauſe as Chriſt is ſaid to be the Father's Face, and the Image of his Perſon, 2 *Cor.* iv. 6. and *Heb.* i. 3. So may he be called the Father's Name, and ſo doth God himſelf call him, *Exod.* xxiii. 20, 21. *The Angel that went before him in the Wilderneſs, whoſe Voice they ought to obey, his Name is in him*, and this Angel is *Chriſt Jeſus*, Acts vii. 37, 38. So then Chriſt Jeſus is God's Name: God as he revealeth himſelf in the Word, is *God in Chriſt reconciling the World unto himſelf*, 2 Cor. v. 19. And therefore Chriſtians, you ought to pray always in Chriſt's Name, and this is to call on his Name. Not only encourage yourſelves to come to God, becauſe of a Mediator, becauſe he is God in Chriſt, but alſo offer up all your Prayers in Jeſus his Name, that his Name called on them may ſanctify them, otherwiſe your affectionate

fectionate Prayers cannot be acceptable to God, for he loveth nothing but what cometh through the Son; Prayer must have an evil Savour, when it is not put in the golden Censer, that this Angel hath to offer up Incense with the Prayers of the Saints. And likewise you would know God's Justice and Wrath, that you may serve in Fear and Trembling: And when trembling is joined with the rejoycing of Faith, this is acceptable Service. You ought to fear to offend his Holiness, while you are before him. Let God's Terribleness have a deep Impression on your Spirits, both to make Sin bitter, and to make Mercy more sweet. Thus should Prayer ascend with the Seal of God's Attributes, and then is it a calling on his Name. Now, is there any calling on his Name among us? Who maketh it his Study to take up God in his glorious Names? Therefore you call not on a known God, and cannot name him. Now, all of you take this Rule to judge your Prayers by. Think you not that you make many Prayers? You both think it and say it, as you use to say, I pray both Day and Night. Nay, but count after this Rule, and there will be found few Prayers in *Scotland*, albeit you reckon up both private and publick. Once scrape out of the Count the Prayers of the prophane and scandalous, whose Practice defileth their Prayers; and again, blot out the Prayers of Mens Tongues and Mouths when Hearts are absent; and again, set aside the formal, dwyning, coldrife, indifferent Supplications of Saints, and the Prayers that carry no Seal of God's Name and Attributes on them, Prayers made to an unknown God, and will you find many behind? No certainly, any of you may take up the Complaint in Behalf of the Land, *There is none that calleth on thy Name*, or few to count upon. You may say so of yourselves if you judge thus, I have almost never prayed, God hath never heard my Voice, and you may say so of the Land. This would be a well spent Day, if this were but our Exercise, to find out the Sins of our Duties in former Humiliation: If the Spirit did so convince you, as to blot out of the Roll of Fasts all the former. If you come this length as to be convinced solidly that you have never yet prayed and mourned for Sin. I have lived this long, and been babling all this while, I have never once spoken to God, but worshipped I know not what, fancied a God like myself, that would be as soon pleased with me, I was with myself. If the Lord wrought thus on your Hearts, to put you off your own Righteousness, you should have more Advantage in this, than in all your Sabbaths and Fasts hitherto.

Secondly, Altho' the Lord's Hand be upon them, and they fade as a Leaf, and are driven into another Land, yet *none calleth on his Name*; this maketh the Complaint more lamentable, and no doubt is looked upon as a dreadful Sign and Token of God's Displeasure, and of sorer Strokes. *Daniel* an Eye-witness confirmeth this foretold Truth, *Chap.* ix. 13. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not made our Prayers to the Lord our God.* Well may the Lord make a Supposition and Doubt of it, *Lev.* xxvi. 40, 41. After so many Plagues are come on, seven addeth to seven, and again seven Times more, and yet they will not be humbled. And when it is even at the Door next to utter Destruction and Consumption, he addeth, *If then their uncircumcised Hearts be humbled, and they take with the Punishment of Sin*, &c. We need ask no Rea-

ſon for this, for *bray a Fool in a Morter, his Folly will not depart from him*, Prov. xxvii. 22. Poor fooliſh Man is a fooliſh Man, Folly is born with him, Folly is his Name, and ſo is he. He hath not ſo much Wiſdom as to *hear the Voice of the Rod, and him that appointeth it.* Poor *Ephraim is an undaunted Heifer.* Nature is *a Bullock unaccuſtomed with the Yoke*, and ſo it is chaſtiſed more and more, *Jer.* xxxi. 18. Man is like an untamed Beaſt, as the Horſe, or as the Mule. Threatnings will not do it, *God ſpeaketh once, yea twice, and Man perceiveth it not*, Job xxxiii. 14. God inſtructeth by the Word, and Men receive no Inſtruction: All the Warnings to flee from the Wrath to come, are as ſo many Tales to make Children afraid. He ſaith in his Heart, *I ſhall have Peace, tho' I walk in the Imagination of my own Heart.* Since therefore he will not incline his Ear to the Word, God ſendeth his Rod to ſeal the Word, and yet Men are ſo wild that they fight with God's Rods, and will not ſubmit to him: *A Yoke muſt be put on* Ephraim, *a Bridle in Mens Mouths*, Pſal. xxxii. 9. They will put God to more Pains than ſpeaking, and it ſhall coſt them more Pain: For he that will not be drawn with the Cords of a Man, Love and Intreaties, muſt be drawn with the Cords of a Beaſt, and yoked in a heavy Yoke. Yet Men are unruly, and the Yoke groweth the heavier and ſorer, that they ſtrive to ſhake it off. An uncircumciſed Heart cannot be humbled, *How can the Leopard change his Spots, no more can my People return to me*, Jer. xiii. 23. It is ſtrange that a People ſo afflicted, will not take with the Puniſhment of their Iniquity, but will ſay in their Heart, Wherefore come theſe Things upon me? But here it is, how can an uncirumciſed Heart be humbled? *God may beat on Men with Rods as on a Dog, but he will run away from him ſtill the more*, Iſa. ix. 13. Nay, it may be, there will be more ſtirring after God, and more awaking by the firſt Stroke of Affliction, than when they are continued and multiplied: The Uncouthneſs of Rods may affect People ſomething, but when his Hand lyeth on but a little, Cuſtom breedeth Hardneſs, and more and more alienateth Spirits from him.

Now we need no more to ſeal this Truth, but our own Experience. I think never People might ſpeak more ſenſibly of it. It hath been the Manner of the Lord's dealing with us, to uſe fair Means to gain us, to threaten before he laid on, to give a Proclamation before his Stroke; and yet it hath been our Manner from our Youth up to harden ourſelves againſt him, and go on in our own Way. Therefore hath the Lord after long Patience laid on ſad Strokes, and ſmitten us, yet have we not turned to him. It may be when the Chaſtiſement was freſh and green, ſome *poured out a Prayer, and in Trouble viſited God*, Iſa. xxvi. 18. but the Body of the Land hath not known him that ſmote them, and never ran into their hiding Place, but the Temptation of the Time *like a Flood hath carried them away with it.* And for the Lord's Children, how ſoon doth the Cuſtom of a Rod eat out the Senſe of it, and Prayer doth not grow proportionably to the Lord's Rods. The Lord hath expected that *ſome might ſtand in the Gap and interceed, yet few or none called on his Name.* General Corrections of the Land hath made general Apoſtacy from God, not a turning in to God; ſo that we may ſay, we never entered a Furnace, but we have

have come out with more Dross, contracted Dross in the Fire. Mens Zeal and Tenderness hath been burnt up, reprobate Silver may God call us: We have had so much Experience of the Unprofitableness of former Afflictions, that we know not what the Lord shall do with us. We think it may be the Lord's Complaint of *Scotland*, *Why should you be afflicted any more, you will revolt more and more*, Isa. i. 5. What needeth another Rod? You are now all secure, it is true, because you are not stricken; nay, but what needeth a Rod? For it cannot awake you, all the Fruit of it would be, not to purge away Sin, but to increase it: General Judgments will prove general Temptations, and will alienate you more from me, and make you curse God and the Covenant. And indeed the Truth is, we know not what outward Dispensation can fall on, that can affect this Generation; we know not what the Lord can have behind, that can work on us: Judgment hath had as much Terror, Mercies as much Sweetness, and as much of God in the one and the other, as readily hath been since the Beginning of the World. Only this we know, all Things are possible to him, which are impossible to us; and if the Spirit work to sanctify the Rod, a more gentle Rod shall work more effectually; his Word shall do as much as his Rod.

The Case we are now into, is just this; *None calleth on thee.* Is is a terrible one, whether our Condition be good or bad outwardly, our Peace hath put us asleep, and the Word cannot put Men to Prayers. Now, the Lord hath begun to threaten, as you have been still in Fear of new Troubles, and a Revolution of Affairs again; yet I challenge your own Consciences, and appeal to them, whom hath the Word prevailed with, to put to Prayer? Whom hath the Rumour of approaching Trouble, put to their Prayers? Whose Spirit hath been affected with God's frowning on the Land? And this yet more aggravateth your Laziness; in the Time that God doth shew terrible Things to his People in *Ireland*, *giveth them a Cup of Wormwood, and to drink the Wine of Astonishment*: Are not you yet at ease? When your Brethren and fellow Saints are scattered among you as Strangers, yet your Hearts bleed not. Well, behold the End of it, your Case is a sad Prognostick of the Lord's hiding his Face and consuming us; nay, it is a sure Token that his Face is hid already. When *Job*'s Friends would aggravate his Misery, they sum it up in this, *thou restrainest Prayer from God.* It is more Wrath to be kept from much praying, nor to be scattered from your own Houses. Therefore, if you would have the Clouds of God's Anger that covereth the Land with Blackness, go over you, and pour out itself on others; if you would prevent the Rod, hearken to the Word and stir up yourselves to much Prayer, that you may be called his Remembrancers? O how long shall Prayer be banished this Kingdom? The Lord's Controversy must be great with us, for since the Days of our first Love, there has been great Decay of the Spirit of Prayer: The Children of God should be so much in it, as they might be one with it. *David* was so much in Prayer, as he in a Manner defined himself by it, *Psal.* cix. 4. *I gave myself unto Prayer.* In the Original, there is no more, but, *I Prayer.* I was all Prayer. It was my Work, my Element, my Affection, my Action. Nay, to speak the Truth, it is the Decay of Prayer that hath made all this Defection in the Land.

Would you know the Original of many a publick Man's Apostacy and Backsliding in the Cause of God, what maketh them so soon forget their solemn Engagements, and grow particular, seeking their own Things, untender in seeking the Things of God? Would you trace back the Desertion up to the Fountain-head? Then come and see. Look upon such a Man's walking with God in private, such a Man's praying, and you shall find Matters have been first wrong there. Alienation and Estrangement from God himself in immediate Duties and secret Approaches, hath made Mens Affections cool to his Interest in publick Duties. And believe it, the Reason why so few great Men or none are so cordial, constant and thorough in God's Matters is this, they pray not in Secret; they come to Parliament or Council, where publick Matters concerning the Honour of God are to be debated, as any Statesman of *Venice* would come to the Senate; they have no Dependence on God to be guided in these Matters; they are much in publick Duties, but little in secret with God: Believe it, any Man's private walking with God, shall be read upon his publick Carriage, whether he be Minister or Ruler.

There is yet another Thing we would have you consider, to endear this Duty unto you, and bind upon your Consciences, an absolute Necessity of being much in it, and it is this. Prayer and calling on his Name is often put for all immediate Worship of God, especially the more substantial and moral Part of Service. This People was much in Ceremonials, and they made these their Righteousness; nay, but there was little secret conversing with God, walking humbly with him, loving him, believing in him: Well then, Prayer is, as it were, a Compend and Sum of all Duties; it contains in it, Faith, Love, Repentance, all these should breathe out in Prayer. In a Word, if we say unto you, be much in Prayer, we have said all, and it is more than all the rest, because it is a more near and immediate Approach to God, having more solid Religion in it; if you be lively in this, you are thriving Christians; if you wither here, all must decay, for Prayer sappeth and watereth all other Duties with the Influence of Heaven.

That stirreth up himself to take Hold on thee] This expresseth more of their Condition under the Rod, and while God was threatning to depart and leave them, none took so much Notice of it, as to awake out of his Dream, to take a fast Hold of God; it was but like the Grip a Man taketh in his slumbering, that he soon quitteth in his Sleep, none awaketh himself, as a Bird stirreth up itself with its Wings to Flight; none do so spread out their Sails to meet the Wind: This importeth a great Security and Negligence, a careless Stupidity; to take hold, to grip strongly and violently, importeth both Faith acted on God, and Communion with God, so that the Sense is, no body careth whither thou go, there is none that stirreth up himself to take violent Hold of thee; Men ly loose in their Interest, and indifferent in the one Thing necessary, do not strongly grip to it. No body keepeth thee by Prayer and Intercession, so that there is no Diligence added to Diligence, there is no stirring up of ourselves in Security.

First, When the Lord seemeth to withdraw, and when he is angry, it is our Duty to take hold the more on him; and not only to act Faith, and call on him by Prayer, but to add to ordinary Diligence, it should be extraordinary. *First* then

I say, when the Lord is withdrawing and seemeth angry, we ought not to withdraw from him by Unbelief, but to draw near, and take hold on him. And the Lord giveth a Reason of this himself, *Isa.* xxvi. 4, 5. *because Fury is not in me.* It is but a Moment's Anger, it is not Hatred of your Persons but Sins, it is not Fury that hath no Discretion in it, to difference between a Friend and an Enemy: It is but at least a Father's Anger, that is not for Destruction, but Correction. The Lord is not implacable, come to him and win him, *Let him take hold of me, and let him make Peace with me, if he will make Peace.* He is a God whose Compassions fail not; and so he is never so angry, but there is Room left for Manifestation of Mercy on those that come to him. God's Anger is not an Humour and Passion as ours is, he can take the poor Child in his Arms, admit it into his Bosom, when outward Dispensations frown. Mens Anger is like the Sons of *Belial*, Briers and Thorns that none may come near to, least they be hurt; but God angry is accessible, because his Anger is still tempered and mixed with Clemency and Mercy; and that Mixture of Mercy is so great, and so predominant in all his Dispensations here, that they being rightly understood, might rather invite to come, than scar from it; there is more Mercy to welcome, than Anger to drive away.

Secondly, Look upon the very End and Purpose of God's hiding himself, and withdrawing; it is this, that we may come and seek him early, *Hos.* v. 15. When God is angry, Mercy and Compassion principleth it, for Anger is sent out to bring in Wanderers; His Anger is not Humour, but resolute and deliberate, walketh upon good Grounds, because *David* in his Prosperity missed not God. When all Things went according to his Mind, then he let God go where he will; therefore, the Lord in Mercy must hide his own Heart with a frowning Countenance, and cover himself with a Cloud, that *David* may be troubled, and so take hold on God, *Psal.* xxxi. 7, 8. Since then this is God's Purpose, that you may come nearer to him, and since he goeth away that you may pursue; certainly he will never so run away as you may not find him out, nor will he run further, nor he strengtheneth thee to pursue him; thus, *Psal.* lxiii. 8. God was flying, and *David* pursuing; nay, but the Flyer giveth Legs to the Pursuer, he upholdeth him, as it were against himself: So did the Angel strengthen *Jacob* to overcome himself. Now, shall it not be pleasant to God, that you lay hold on him as your own, even when he seemeth to be cloathed with Vengeance, seeing he changeth his outward Countenance for this very End, he seemeth to go, that you may hold, because when you think he stayeth, you hold not, as the Child, while the Nurse is near, will look about it, and take hold of any Thing; but when she withdraweth, the Child cleaveth the faster to her.

But *Secondly*, We ought to stir up ourselves more now than any other Time: Times of God's withdrawing calleth for extraordinary and doubled Approaches. So *Hab.* v. 15. *They will seek me early.* And therefore the Lord's Children in Scripture, have made great Advantage of such Dispensations. The Truth is, as long as we are well dealt with, Security creepeth on, and Religion is but in a decaying Condition: Duties are done through our Sleep: We are not as Men awaking and knowing what we do, and whither we go. But when the Lord be-

beginneth to trouble us, and hides his Face, then it is a Time to awake out of Sleep, before all be gone: And there ought to be *first*, more Diligence in Duties and Approaching to God, becauſe your Caſe furniſheth more Matter of Supplication; and as Matter of Supplication groweth, Prayer ſhould grow. If Neceſſity grow, and the Cry be not according to Neceſſity, it is ominous. And therefore *David* uſeth to make his Cry go up according to his Trouble. In a proſperous Condition, tho' every Thing might call a tender hearted loving Chriſtian to ſome Nearneſs to God; yet ordinarily, if Neceſſity preſs not, Prayer languiſheth and groweth formal. Senſe of Need putteth an Edge on Supplication, whereas Proſperity blunteth it. The Heart miſſing nothing, cannot go above ſublunary Things; but let it not have its Will here, and the Need of Heaven will be the greater. Now I ſay, if you ſit ſo many Calls, both from a Command, and from your own Neceſſities, you do ſo much the more Sin. *Affliction will make even a Hypocrite ſeek him, and pour out a Prayer and viſit him*, Pſal. lxxviii. and *Iſa.* xxvi. And if you do not take Advantage of all theſe Preſſures, you muſt be ſo much the more guilty; and therefore, God, as is were, wondereth at their Obſtinacy, *They return not to him that ſmiteth them*: All this is come upon us, yet have we not prayed. And *Secondly*, It is ſent for that End, that you may be more ſerious; and therefore you ought ſo much the more to awake, to lay hold on him. This is the Way the Lord uſeth with his ſecure and wandring Children, *Pſal.* cxix. 67. For the Lord findeth us often gripping too ſtrongly to a preſent World; and taking it in our Arms, as if we were never to part with it: Mens Souls cleave to outward Accommodations; therefore the Lord uſeth to part us and our Idol, that we may take hold of him the faſter. It is Union with himſelf, that is our Felicity, and it is that which God moſt endeavoureth. When he removeth beloved Jewels, it is becauſe they were a ſtumbling Block, and divorced the Soul from God: When he ſeemeth to withdraw himſelf, his going proclaimeth ſo much, Oh follow, or periſh.

Thirdly, It is a very dangerous Thing, when he withdraweth and you follow not, when he is angry, and you care not, doth not fly in to make Peace with him; certainly his Anger muſt wax hotter, and Deſertion will become a ſpiritual Plague, Rods muſt be tempered with much Bitterneſs. What Mixture of Mercy can be in ſuch a Diſpenſation, where the Fruit of it is to harden: But if the Lord's hardeſt dealing wrought you to more Nearneſs and Communion with himſelf; then certainly you have a fair Advantage againſt the preſent Trouble, and you have your Cup mixed. You ſhall at length bleſs God for ſuch Diſpenſations; they may be reckoned for Good to you. Next, There ought to be more Exerciſe of Faith, and laying hold on the Grounds of Conſolation in God, in ſuch a Time. *Firſt*, For as Difficulties grow, Faith ſhould fortify itſelf againſt them ſo much the more. The greater the Storm be, it ſhould fly the more into the Chambers. Faith in the Time of a calm Day getteth no Trial; Faith bulketh much, becauſe it hath not much to do. But except there be ſome freſh and new Supplies, it cannot hold out in a Temptation: But it is a ſingular Proof of a noble and divine Faith, that can lay hold on him, and keep him, when he would go, that can challenge Kind-

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neſs on a miskenning Jeſus, that can ſtand on the Ground of the Promiſes, when there is not a Foot-breadth of a Diſpenſation to build on: While all Things go with you, ye have no Difficulty to maintain your Faith; nay, but when the Lord ſeemeth to look angry, then awake and gather Strength, take hold on his Strength; look what is in your Condition, or his Diſpenſation, what is Good or Ominous, then take hold on the other Hand on him, and look what is in him to anſwer it, and ſwallow it up: Ye ought to be well acquaint with the Grounds of Conſolation that are in God, in the worſt Caſe; and then ye might lay hold on him, tho' he ſeemed a conſuming Fire. It is then a Time that calleth moſt for ſecuring your Intereſt in him, a Time when there is no external Advantage to beguile you, a Time when the only Happineſs is to be one with God. Therefore the Man who in ſuch Calamities and Judgments, is not awaked to put his eternal Eſtate out of queſtion, he is in a dangerous Caſe: For do not moſt Part drive over their Days, and have no Aſſurance of Salvation, they dare not ſay, either *pro*, or *contra*. It may be, and it may not be. And this is the length that the moſt Part come, a negative Peace; no poſitive Confidence; no clear concluding on ſure Grounds an Intereſt. Always ye are moſt called to this, when God afflicteth the Land, or you: If ye do not then make Peace, it is moſt dangerous. *Thirdly*, The Lord loveth Faith in a Difficulty beſt, it is the ſingleſt and the cleanlieſt, it is that which moſt honoureth him, and glorifieth his Truth and Faithfulneſs, and Sufficiency and Mercy; for then it is moſt purely elevated above Creatures, and pitcheth moſt on God; and therefore bringeth Men to this, *No Help for my Soul, but thou art my Portion.* And this commendeth God moſt, when he is ſet alone. Proſperity bringeth him down among Creatures, and ſecure Faith maketh little Diſtinction; but awakening Faith grippeth ſtrongly and ſingly, putteth God alone.

Secondly, Oftentimes, when God is departing, none ſtirreth up himſelf to lay hold on him. Altho' there may be praying and doing of many Duties, yet there is nothing beyond the ordinary. The Varieties and Acceſſions of new Grounds of Supplications doth never make greater Frequency, nor more Fervency. This our Experience may clear unto us both in Duties and Faith. *Firſt*, There is very little Diligence in ſeeking of God in the Way and Means appointed, even when God ſeemeth to bid farewel to the Land, and go away: No body cometh in as an Interceſſor. Men keep on their old Way of praying, and never addeth to it, come what like. Who is it that riſeth above his Ordinary, as the Tide of God's Diſpenſation is? There ought to be ſuch an Impreſſion made by the Changes of God's Countenance, as might be read on the Duties of his People. There ſhould be ſuch a Diſtance between your ordinary and ſuch Times, as between a ſleeping Man and a waking Man, that whatever your Attainment of Acceſs to God be, ye might ſtir up and go beyond it, according as Matters call. Will God count your publick Faſts a Performance of this Duty? Alas, we faſt ſleeping, and none ſtirreth up himſelf to theſe Things. Is there any Difference betwixt your ſolemn Humiliation and another Sabbath? And is there any Difference between a Sabbath and a Week-day, ſave the external Duty? Is not this palpably our Caſe? Is there any wakening among us? No, Security

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is both the universal Disease and Complaint; and it is become an incurable Disease, since it became a Complaint. Doth any of you pray more in private than ye used? Or what Edge is on your Prayers? Alas, the Lord will get good leave to go from us; it feareth me, that we would give Christ a Testimonial to go over Seas. *Hold him, hold him.* Nay, the Multitude would be gladly quite of him, they cannot abide his Yoke, his Work is a Burden, his Word is a Torment, his Discipline is Bands and Cords; and what Heart can ye then have to keep Christ? What Violence can ye offer to him to hold him still? All your Intreaties may be fair Compliments, but they would never rent his Garment. *Secondly*, There is no up-stirring to Faith among us, and laying hold on Jesus Christ, albeit all his Dispensations warn us that it is now high Time. There are not many who are about this Point effectually, to stir up their Faith, or to secure their Interest. Think ye that Conjectures will carry you thorough Difficulties. The Multitude think they believe much, but any Temptation proveth their Mistake. The most Part of *Scotland* would deny God and his Son Jesus Christ, if they were put to it. Always it is a Time ye would not ly out from your strong Hold, Faith only uniteth you to Christ, and if ye would be kept in any Trial, stir up Faith.

Thirdly, Prayer and Faith, Diligence and laying hold on God, must go together, and help one another. Not calling on his Name, and not laying hold on him go together, and have Influence one upon another. *First*, Faith hath Influence on Prayer. Laying hold on God in Christ, will make right calling on his Name, it learneth Men how to call God, to call him *Abba, Father.* Faith useth to vent itself in Prayer; I say, much Consideration of God, and claiming in to him, and to the Grounds of Confidence in him, must both make Prayer acceptable, and carry the Stamp and Impression of God's Name, or Christ's Name on it, and also make much Prayer: For when a Soul hath pitched on God, as its only Felicity, and thus made choice of him, it findeth in him all Sufficiency, all Things for all Things; there is no Necessity, but it findeth a Supply in his Fulness for it; and therefore it applyeth a Man to the Fountain, *to draw out of the Wells of Salvation.* There is nothing can be so sweet and refreshing, as for such a Soul to pour out itself every Day in him, to talk with him Face to Face. Faith engageth the Heart to come to God with all Things; whereas many Difficulties would have been, and the secure or unsettled Heart would have gone as many different Ways to help them: Faith layeth hold on God, knoweth but one, and bringeth all here; and therefore Access to God is a Fruit of it, *Access unto the Grace wherein we stand by Faith.* And again, how can Prayer be acceptable, as long as Faith doth not principle it? it is but like a Beast groaning under a Burden. Laying hold on God himself makes a Man's Duties acceptable, because he speaks and asks, believing that he shall receive, he trusteth God, and doth not tempt him. Where lively Faith is not entertained, there cannot be much Affection, which is the Oil of the Wheels. There may be in some Bitterness of Spirit much Vehemency, but that is not a pure Flame of divine Love that burneth upward to him, and it is soon extinguished, and lasteth no longer nor present Sense, and then the Soul groweth harder, as Iron

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that had been in the Fire. *Secondly*, When there is not much Prayer and Calling, Faith cannot be strong and violent; for Prayer is even the Exercise of Faith, if you wear out of that, Faith rusteth. There may be much Quietness with little Prayer, but there cannot be much and strong and lively Faith; for where it getteth not continual Imployment it faggs. And indeed Prayer is a special Point of holding God fast, and keeping him; therefore join these, if ye would thrive in any one of them. Your unbelieving Complaints are not Prayers and calling on his Name, because they are not mixed with Faith. As the Apostle said of the Word, so may it be said of Prayer, your Prayers are not profitable, are not heard, because not mixed with Faith. Ye use to doubt, that ye may be fervent, to question your Interest, that ye may stir up your Spirits to Prayer: But alas, what a simple gross Mistake is that? Poor Soul, tho' thou get more Liberty, shall it be counted Access to God? Tho' you have more Grief, and your Bitterness doth indite more Eloquence, shall God be moved with it? Know ye not that you should ask without wavering, and lift up pure Hands without Wrath and Doubting? And yet both are there.

Fourthly, The Duty we are called to in such a Time when God is angry, is to lay hold on him. We would speak a Word more of it: And *first*, We ought to hold a departing Lord, by wrestling with him in Supplication, *not to let him depart till he bless*, Hos. xii. 3, 4. The Application of *Jacob*'s Victory over the Angel is thus, *Turn ye to the Lord, and wait on him*, &c. How had *Jacob* Power over the Angel? By Supplication and Weeping; so that Prayer is a Victory over God, even the Lord God of Hosts. We ought (as it were) to strive against outward Dispensation; when it saith, He is gone, when our Condition saith, He is gone, or going, we ought to wrestle with it. No Submission to such a departing, I mean, no Submission that sitteth down with it, and is not careful how it be. Now this Time calleth you to such an Exercise. The Lord seemeth to be angry with us; there is a strong Cloud over the Land, and like to pour down upon us, the Lord is drawing a Sword again, and beginning now to lay on: Many Threatnings would not put us to Supplication. Now, what will the laying on of the Rod do? If the former Days be returning wherein ye saw much Sorrow; is it not then high Time for the Lord's Remembrancers, and for the Lord's Children to wrestle with God? As *Esau* was coming on *Jacob*, so hath God armed Men, and such desperate Men, as he hath made a Rod to us before. If we be twice beaten with it, it is very just, for before we did not seek in to him who smote us. You would know this, that the Lord is but seeking Imployment, and if ye would deal with him, ye may make Advantage of the present and future Calamities. And look to this laying hold on him: This is the chief Thing ye should now heed. It is God himself that should be your principal Object: Praying should be a laying hold on God, it should meet with himself. For the most Part in the Time of Prosperity, we cannot meet with God singly, we have so much to do with Creatures, we keep Trysts so punctually with them, so that we cannot keep with God: We have so many Things in our Affections and Thoughts, that God cannot get Place, he cannot get us at Leisure for the Throng of our Business: We lose God, by catching at Shadows.

Well then, we are called in such a Time of Difficulty to come in to God himself, to draw by the Vail of Ordinances, that we may have Communion with God himself. And this is right praying when the Soul getteth such immediate Access to God, as it were, to handle him, and see him, and taste him, to exercise its Senses on him. Ordinances have been of a long Time a covering of his Face, and he useth not now to unvail himself in the Sanctuary, and let us see his Glory: God is departed from preaching and Praying, and the solemn Meeting; so that we meet not with God, we lay hold on a Shadow of an outward Ordinance, but not on God himself. Therefore Christians make Advantage of this Time, you may be brought to want Ordinances, then lay hold on himself, who is the Substance and Marrow of them: You may be denuded of outward Comforts and Accommodation here, then lay hold on himself in much Prayer. If Affliction would blow away the Cloud on his Face, or would scatter our Idols from us, and make us single alone with God, as *Jacob* was, it were well sent.

Secondly, Your Exercise should be to take hold on God by Faith. And *first*, Ye would make Peace with God, be much in direct Acts of apprehending God himself in Jesus Christ. And this is according as ye take up yourselves in your own Misery and Necessity. Do but travel continually between your own Misery and something answerable in God.

The first Thing we would have you do now when God frowns upon us, find out your own lost Condition, and how great Strangers you have been to him, even when ye have approached in many Ordinances; and find a Necessity of making Peace with God and Atonement. Now from this, lay hold on Christ as *the Hope set before you*, look upon that in him which will answer all your Necessities, and be suitable to them. It is not Matters of outward Lot that should go neareſt your Heart: Let the World go where it will, that which concerneth you most in such a Time, is the securing your Soul: For if you lose it, what gain you? What keep you? Your Houses and Lands and Lives may be in Hazard: Nay, but one Thing is more worth than all these, and in more Hazard. Begin at spiritual Things, and ask how Matters stand between God and thee.

Secondly, Not only would ye be much in immediate Application unto Jesus Christ, but ye would so take hold of him, as ye may be sure ye have him. Make Peace, and know that ye have made it, and then shall ye be kept in perfect Peace. You would never rest until you can on solid Grounds answer the Question. And this Duty is called for from you at such a Time, for *the Just shall live by Faith*, in a troublesome Time, *Hab.* ii. 4. And as ye ought to keep and hold fast Confidence, and not cast it away in such a Time, so should ye all seek after it: Do not only rest in this, I know not but I may belong to Christ, I dare not say against it. O no Christians, you should have positive clear Grounds of Assurance, *I am his, and he is mine: I know that my Redeemer liveth. God is my Portion.* And if ye conclude this solidly, I defy all the World to shake and trouble your Peace: This is perfect Peace, *Peace, Peace*, double Peace. How can you choose but be shaken at every Blast of Temptation, when you are not thus solidly grounded, when you hold not at your Anchor.

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And *Thirdly*, Having thus laid hold on Christ, as your own, lay hold on all in him as yours, and for your Use. Whatever Difficulty the present Time, or your own Condition afford, search but as much in God, as may counterballance it. Answer all Objections, from his Mercy, Goodness, Power, Wisdom, Unchangeableness, and this shall be more nor the Trouble: God himself laid hold upon, and made ours, is more nor removing a temporal Calamity. It is an eternal Weight, to weigh down all Crosses and Disappointments. For what can present Things be? Is there not in the Favour of his Countenance, that which may drown them in Oblivion? Are ye like to sink here? Is not God a sure Anchor to hold by? And if ye do not this, your Trouble is nothing in respect of the Danger of your Soul. Secure and loose lying out of God, not putting this Matter to a full Point, is worse nor all your outward fading. Therefore we exhort you in the Lord's Name, to fly in to this Name of the Lord, as a strong Tower to run to and be safe. When the Lord seemeth now to be angry with us, run not away from him, tho' he should yet cloath himself with Vengeance as a Garment.

But *first*, O ye poor People who have never asked this Question, whether have I any Interest in Jesus? Ask it now, and resolve it in Time. If Trouble come on, if Scattering and Desolation come on, and our Land fade as a Leaf, certainly the Lord's Anger will drive you away. What will ye do in the Time of his Indignation? All of you put this to the Tryal, how Matters stand between God and you.

And *Secondly*, If ye find all wrong, do not sink in Discouragement; all may be amended, while it is seen Wrong in Time. Nay, God taketh away outward Accommodation, to make you more serious in this. And it is the very Voice of Rods, every one fly in to your Hold, every one make Peace with me. You may take hold, and do it feckfully.

Thirdly, You who have fled to Jesus, take more hold of him; you are called also to renew your Faith, and begin again: Make Peace with God, let your Confidence be kept fast, and thus shall ye be immoveable, because he changeth not. God will not go from you if ye believe, hold him by Faith. Christ could not do great Things in *Galilee*, *because of their Unbelief, and so he departed from them*. As Unbelief maketh an evil Heart, to depart from the God of all Life and Consolation; so doth it make God depart from us. But Faith casteth a Knot upon him (to speak with Reverence) it fastened him by his own Word and Promise, and he cannot go by it. It is a violent Hand laid on God. I will not let thee go till thou bless me.

Fourthly, Faith and Prayer, or holding of God, by believing in him, and much imploying him, needeth much stirring up unto, and awaking. *That stirreth up himself to take hold on thee*. Security is the Moth of both these, and eateth out the Life of Faith and Supplication: It maketh Prayer so coldrife, that it cannot prevail, and Faith so weak, that it cannot use Violence. *First*, Security apprehendeth no Evil, no Need. A secure Condition is a Dream, that one is eating, and yet his Soul is empty. Look how the People of *Laish* were quiet and secure, apprehending no Evil; Destruction cometh then on as an armed Man. Always, it is much Necessity that administers Fewel to a Man's Faith and Sup-

plication. *David*, Pſal. xxx. 7, *I ſaid in my Proſperity, I ſhall not be moved.* Nay, but many ſay in Adverſity, and cry Peace, Peace, where no Peace is. Security pleadeth Innocency, and then believeth Immunity. *I am innocent, therefore ſhall his Anger turn away*, Jer. ii. 35. Security applieth not Sin, and ſo refuſeth the Curſe of Sin, and Wages of it. And thus is a Man in his own Eyes, *a Lord, and then he will come no more to God*, Jer. ii. 31. It is almoſt impoſſible to awake Men by general Judgments, to apprehend perſonal Danger, and Men never ſtir out of their Neſt, till it be on Fire. We can behold, or hear of our Neighbours ſpoiling, and Violence done to them; but till the Voice of a Cry be heard in our own Streets and Fields, no Body will take the Judgment to themſelves. It is well ſaid, that which is ſpoken to all, is ſpoken to none; ſo what is done to all in general, is done to none. The Voice of a general Rod, ſpeaketh not particularly, and maketh not Men apprehenſive of ſad Things; and thus Men are not preſſed unto Prayer, are not put out of themſelves; it is only Neceſſity that ſaps the Roots of it, and makes it green. *Secondly*, Security is lazy and not active, putteth not forth its Hand to work, and ſo dieth a Beggar, for, *only the Hand of the Diligent maketh rich.* Laying hold on God is a Duty that requireth much Spirit in it: Men do not grip Things well in their ſlumbering. There is no Duty that needeth ſo ſpiritual and lively Principles. If a Man do not put on ſuch a Piece of Reſolution and Edge upon him, he cannot come to the Wreſtling of Prayer, and Violence of Faith. Altho' the Exerciſe and Acting of Grace dependeth more upon the Spirit of God, his preſent Influence, than upon the Soul of Man; yet this is the Way the Lord communicateth his Influence, by ſtirring up and exciting the Creature to its Duty, as if it could do it alone. Grace is one Thing, and the ſtirring up of it is another Thing: For when we ly by and ſleep over our Time, and go not about the Matter ſo ſeriouſly, as it were Life and Death, it is but a weak Hold we can take of God. According to the Meaſure of a Man's apprehending Neceſſity, and according to the Meaſure of his Seriouſneſs in theſe Things, ſo will the Hand of Faith grip, and lay hold with more or leſs Violence. As a Man drowning, will be put from ſleeping, and when one is in extreme Hazard, all his Strength will unite together in one, to do that which at any ordinary Time it could not do; ſo ought it to be here. A Chriſtian aſſaulted with many Temptations, ſhould unite his Strength, and try the yondmoſt. O but your whole Spirits would run together, to the ſaving of yourſelf, if ye were very apprehenſive of Neceſſity. The Exerciſe of Faith is a dead Grip, that cannot part with what it grippeth. Therefore *firſt*, We muſt ſay to you, it is not ſo eaſy a Thing as you believe, to lay hold on God, there muſt be ſtirring up to it. And when the Lord ſpeaketh of our ſtirring ourſelves, certainly he meaneth this, likewiſe, that he muſt ſtir us, ere we ſtir ourſelves. *Secondly*, Above all be afraid of a ſecure Condition: It is the Enemy of Communion with God and ſpiritual Life; therefore look about you, and apprehend more your Neceſſity, and then give no Reſt and Quietneſs to yourſelf, till you have imployed and engaged him; be as Men flying, to lay hold on the Refuge ſet before you. *Thirdly*, It muſt be a Time of little Acceſs to God, and little Faith, when we are all ſecure, and

and no Body goeth about Religion as their Work and Busineſs. We allow ourſelt in it; therefore we do exhort you firſt, to purpoſe this as your End to aim at, and purpoſe by God's Grace to take more hold of God. There is little minding of Duty, and that maketh little doing of it: Once ingage your Hearts to a Love and Deſire of more of this, come to a Point of Reſolution. I muſt know him more, and truſt more in him, be more acquaint with him. And *Secondly*, Put yourſelf in the Way of Duty. It is God that only can ſtir you up, or apply your Hearts to the uſing of Violence to God: But ye would be found in the outward Means much, and in theſe Ways God will meet with you, if you wait on him in them.

For thou haſt hid thy Face from us] Here is the greateſt Plague, a ſpiritual Plague. The laſt *Verſe* was but the beginning of Sorrows, *We all do fade*, &c. But lo, here the Accompliſhment of Miſery, *God hiding his Face*, and conſuming them in the Hand of their Sins. *Firſt*, The Lord's hiding of his Face, and giving up a People to melt away in their Sins; puniſhing with judicial Blindneſs and Security, is the worſt Judgment, it filleth the Cup full. This Complaint goeth on ſtill worſe; and certainly it is worſe, nor their fading as a Leaf, and Exile out of their Land. It is not without Reaſon, that great Troubles and Afflictions are ſo expreſſed, *thou hid thy Face*. As *David* ſaid, *thou hideſt thy Face, and I was troubled*; importing as much, as it is not Trouble that doth trouble, but God's hiding of his Face that maketh Trouble trouble. It is in ſo far Trouble, as it is a Sign of his Diſpleaſure, and as the Frowns of his Countenance are upon it; therefore, the Saints aggravating their Affliction ſay, *Thou hideth thy Face*. You know the Face is the Place whereinto either Kindneſs, or Unkindneſs appeareth. The Lord's Countenance, or Face, is a refreſhful ſweet Manifeſtation of himſelf to a Soul; it is the Lord uſing Familiarity with a Spirit, and this made *David* more glad nor Corn and Wine. Now, the hiding of the Face, the withdrawing of his Countenance is, when the Lord in his Diſpenſation and Dealing doth withhold the Manifeſtation of himſelf, either in Life or Conſolation: When he covereth himſelf with Clouds round about, that neither can a Soul ſee in to the Back-ſide of it, into his own warm Heart, nor can the Sun-beams ſhine thorow to quicken and refreſh the Soul. The Lord draweth over his Face, a Vail of a croſſing Diſpenſation, or ſuch like.

There is a Deſertion of the Soul in the Point of Life and ſpiritual Action, and there is a Deſertion in regard of Conſolation. The Varieties of the Lord's Deſertions run upon theſe two. As a Chriſtian's Life is Action or Conſolation, and the Lord's Influence is either quickening or comforting; ſo his withdrawing is either a Prejudice to the one or the other. Sometimes *he goeth mourning all the Day*, nay, but *he is ſick of Love*: Sometimes he is a Bottle dryed in the Smoke, and his Moiſture dried up. The Chriſtians Conſolation may be ſubſtracted, and his Life abide, but he cannot have ſpiritual Conſolation, if he be not lively. This Life is more ſubſtantial, Comfort is more refreſhful, Life is more ſolid, Comfort ſweet, that is true growing ſolid Meat, this but Sawce to eat it with.

The hiding here meant is certainly a ſpiritual Puniſhment. The Lord denying unto

unto this People Grace to understand the Voice of the Rod, he appearing as a Party against them, leaving them to their own carnal and lazy Temper, and thus they lay still under God's Displeasure. Now, there is nothing like this, *First*, Because it is a spiritual Punishment, and Estates are not to be valued and laid in the Ballance with the Soul. Albeit Men are become so brutish as to abase their Souls, and prostitute them to any Thing, yet all a Man hath, is not considerable to it. *Secondly*, It is a more excellent Thing is removed by it, *In his Favour is Life*: All Felicity and Happiness is in God's Countenance. If a Man have not this, what hath he else? Losses are according as the Thing is. Nay, but here is more, *My Lord is taken from me, my God hath forgotten me.* And indeed, if Man's true Happiness be in Communion with God, certainly any Interruption coming in must be sad, and make a Man more miserable than the World knoweth. There is a greater Emphasis in that Word, *Thou hast hid thy Face*, than if he had said, all the World hideth their Face and maketh a Scorn of us.

Therefore *first*, Know what is the worst Thing of the Times. Many of you think Sword and Pestilence, and the Burdens of the Time the worst Things; and if you were now to complain, the saddest Complaint would be, Affliction is laid on our Loins. But know this, if your Cities were desolate, if your Land were made a Wilderness, and we Captives in another Land, there is yet a worse Thing than all these, and think you not this strange? Nay, I say, there is something worse already in us, that we know not of, and it is this, *Make the Hearts of this People hard.* A Spirit of Slumber and Deadness from the Lord upon the Land: There are Multitudes he will never shew his Face unto; it is still vailed from them, and they know him not. Ye that think all were well, if ye had Peace and Prosperity, and know no hiding of God's Countenance, no Anger but when he striketh, certainly you know not what his Countenance is, by all *these Things Men neither know Love nor Hatred.* *Secondly*, Whatever Calamity come upon you outwardly, deprecate most spiritual Plagues, and God's deserting. If you have God's Countenance, it may make you glad in much Sadness. You would be most careful lest any Partition-wall come in, lest his Countenance change on you, if you grieve his Spirit and break his Heart. Seek to have his Face to shine, and this shall be a Sun *with healing under his Wings.* O but Christ's Countenance is comely, when it is seen without Clouds; but often it is overclouded with much Provocation.

Secondly, The Lord's hiding of his Face hath Influence on the Temper of Spirits, and Disposition in Duties. The Truth is in general, *In him we live, and move, and have our Being*: And more especially, in many Things that is spiritual, we are of ourselves able to do nothing. The Creature's Holiness, and especially our Life, is but as the Rays that the Sun of Righteousness sendeth forth round about him, and if any Thing come between, it evanisheth: As the Marygold that openeth its Leaves when the Sun riseth, and closeth when it goeth down again; so exactly doth our spiritual Constitution follow the Motions of his Countenance, and depend wholly on them, *Thou hides thy Face, and they are troubled*, Psal. civ. 9. The Lord needeth no more but discountenance us, and we are gone.

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Always *first*, Be more dependent Creatures; we use to act as from Habits within, without any Subordination to the Lord's Grace without us, but we find that our Sufficiency is not of ourself. How often doth your spiritual Condition change on you in an Hour? You cannot command one Thought of God, or act from any Habit of Grace, even then when you can bring forth other Gifts in Exercise. Ye find that Grace findeth more Difficulties, more Interruptions, therefore learn to attend the Changes and Motions of his Countenance.

Secondly, When you find your Heart dead, and you concluded under an Impossibility of taking hold on God in a lively Manner; then I pray you, look unto the Lord's suspending of his Influence, and let your whole Endeavours be at the Throne of Grace to help it: It will not be your own provoking of yourself to your Duty, but you must put yourself upon God, that he may cause his Face to shine.

Thirdly, Tho' the Lord's hiding his Face be often a Cause of our Deadness, and his Desertion maketh all to wither, yet we have often a culpable Hand in it: And he hides his Face, being provoked so to do. One Thing we may mention, grieving of the Holy Ghost whereby we are sealed, quenching the Motions of the Spirit, maketh the Spirit cover his Face with a Vail, and hide it. There is here ordinarily a reciprocal or mutual Influence: Our grieving him, makes him withdraw his Countenance; and his withdrawing his Countenance, maketh us to wither and grow barren.

Fourthly, The most sure and infallible Token of the Lord's hiding his Face, is Security, and a Spirit of Deadness and Laziness; when Folk go about Duties dreaming, and do all, as it were, through their Sleep. Therefore we may conclude sad Things on this Land, that the Lord hideth his Face from us. And therefore arise and do not settle and quiet yourselves in such a Condition: The Lord is angry, needeth any more be said? No more needeth to kind Children: But the Rod must follow this to make Anger sensible.

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